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A
DEFENCE
OF THE
COMMON RIGHTS
OF
CHRISTIANS:
WITH A
NARRATIVE
OF

Mr. JOSEPH RAWSON's Case:

OR,

AN ACCOUNT of several Occurrences
relating to his being excluded from Com-
munion with the Congregational CHURCH
in Nottingham.

By JOHN TAYLOR, D.D.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N.

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NARRATIVE



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OR

AN ACCOUNT OF SEVERAL OCCURRENCES
RELATING TO HIS BEING EXCLUDED FROM COMMUNION
WITH THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN BOSTON.

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LONDON:

JOHN STANTON, 10, N. B. ST. 1844.

our light, as well as Gentiles and
 into the service of our Lord, without a miracle
 and an upright heart.
 And we all know that this is more than can be
 accomplished: It is in fact, that Corinths in as
 much as a few years ago, and now we have
 perverted to Error and Wickedness, even the Grace
 and Truth the Son of God in Person hath revealed
 to us. **A** Wickedness and Corruption of Reli-
 gion, which for more than a Thousand Years hath
 prevailed in the world under the Name of Chri-
DEFENCE

The Gospel in itself is a most noble, precious of
 Truth and Salvation, the **OF THE** worship of the Ma-
 jesty, Wisdom, and Goodness of God; but too
 easily abused to the service of Man's ambition,
 false Learning, and superstitious Heads. And as
 these Characters have been found in every Age,
 there wanted not Men, even in the Apostles Days,
 to explain away the Doctrine of the **CHRISTIANS, &c.**
 and to bring to light the **COMMON RIGHTS**
 of the **OF** the **CHRISTIANS, &c.**

WITHOUT an honest Use of our
 natural Faculties, any Revelation is
 given in vain. For as the *Gentiles*,
 when they had the Means of know-
 ing God, by a perverse Use of Un-
 derstanding, became vain in their
 Reasonings, and sunk into Idolatry and the most
 corrupt Practices; and as the *Jews*, under a clearer
 Light, had notwithstanding found out Ways of
 Error and Falshood to make the Commandment of
 God of none Effect; so also we *Christians*, under

our still greater Light, may, as well as *Gentiles* and *Jews*, pervert Revelation, render it useless, or press it into the Service of our Lusts, without a faithful Endeavour to understand, and an upright Intention to follow the Scriptures, the great Rule of our Religion. And we all know this is more than barely possible. It is in fact true, that *Christians*, in as lamentable a Degree, as either *Pagans* or *Jews*, have perverted to Error and Wickedness, even the Grace and Truth the Son of God in Person hath revealed to us. Witness that amazing Corruption of Religion, which for more than a Thousand Years hath prevailed in the World, under the Name of Christianity.

The Gospel in itself is a most noble Scheme of Truth and Salvation, highly worthy of the Majesty, Wisdom, and Goodness of God; but too plain and simple for Men of worldly Ambition, false Learning, and superstitious Heads. And, as these Characters have been found in every Age, there wanted not Men, even in the Apostles Days, who began to tamper with Revelation, and to turn aside to vain Jangling; to that Degree, that some explained away the Doctrine of the * *Resurrection*, and others the § *Incarnation* of our Lord. By Degrees and Ways, too tedious to relate, Superstition and Pride, human Wit, and corrupt Morals, made the boldest Innovations upon Scripture Doctrine, Error producing and countenancing Error, till all was filled with Perplexity and Confusion, Darkness and Uncertainty; and Articles of Faith, quite unknown to the Apostles, were openly professed, and with a furious Zeal contended for.

To support these Innovations, the Scriptures were violently tortured, and made to speak a Sense they never intended. But being, in many Points, too stubborn

stubborn to yield to any Force that could be offered, they were in Process of Time laid aside, as doubtful and obscure, and human Tradition and Authority substituted in their room. A pretended infallible Judge was set up to determine Faith, decide Controversies, and to govern the Church. Moreover, a new Kind of Learning was invented, consisting of abstract Notions, whimsical and unintelligible Terms of Art, subtle Evasions, and frivolous Distinctions; whereby the Doctrine of Christianity was changed into dark and intricate Schemes, above the Capacity of the Vulgar, and fitted to serve all the Purposes of Error and spiritual Usurpation.

For this false and delusive Learning, Schools were erected, Professors created, and the Study of it conferred Habits of Distinction, Titles of Honour, great Wealth, and high Pre-eminence. In those Schools a thousand Cobwebs were woven, and a thousand idle Books were written, containing an inextricable Maze of Deception, and, under the specious Forms of Ratiocination, intoxicating the Minds of Men, pleasing their Vanity, and puffing them up with a Persuasion, they were possessed of superior Attainments and Abilities. Whereas, indeed, their Fancies were illuded with Shadows and Fictions, Dreams and Chimeras; and their supposed Abilities were only the Art of glozing over Error, and quibbling away the Truth. But in the meantime, how was the Beauty of Religion deformed, and its Purity corrupted! What Controversies were started, and how wisely decided! How did the Learned bewilder and confound themselves! And when Inconsistencies proved too glaring and untractable, then, to ease themselves, and silence importunate Enquiry, *Mystery* was made a convenient Name and Cover for Absurdity; and People were

taught, "it was their Duty to believe what they could not understand."

In the mean while, the Papal Authority exerted itself in forbidding Enquiry, and suppressing the Use of Understanding in Religious Matters, in commanding an implicit Belief of whatever the Church pronounced to be Christian Faith, and in declaring those to be *Hereticks*, under several odious Names, and casting them out of the Communion of the Church, who dared to look into the Scriptures; and were honest enough to believe only what they found therein.

But this was not enough — The Power of the Magistrate was called in *; and whom the Fallacies of School-Learning, or the Authority of the infallible Head could not convince, the secular Arm was to compel. The Kings of the Earth, insensible of their own Interests, and those of Mankind; established by their Laws this spurious Religion, and prostituted their Power to the unjust Decrees of Inquisitions and spiritual Courts falsely so called. Hence came Imprisonments, Fines, Banishments, Tortures, and the cruelest Kinds of Death. Hence flowed a Sea of Blood, and under the Name of Jesus, the King of Peace, and Saviour of Mankind, the most direful Tragedies were acted, and Thousands of valuable Lives destroyed. Thus were People deterred from Inquiry; thus their Understandings were subdued into the most abject Ignorance, and their Consciences humbled into the most servile Worship of the *Beast*, the usurped Dominion of ambitious Priests.

This is *ROMISH POPERY*. Whereby, as Revelation foretold, the Gospel, which is the Power of

* The first Step of this Kind, was in the Reign of *Constantine the Great*, who banished those Bishops and Presbyters that would not subscribe the *Nicene Creed*.

of God to promote Goodness, Love, Humility and Benevolence amongst Men, is unnaturally turned into an Engine of Usurpation, Pride, Tyranny, Hatred, Malice, and all Manner of Mischief.

To this Sort of *Papery* our first Reformers, about Two hundred Years ago, gave a violent Shock, by separating from the Church of *Rome*, casting off the Pope's Supremacy and Infallibility, translating the Scriptures into the vulgar Tongues, and asserting them alone to be the only Rule of Faith and Doctrine. But having been born and educated in the Error and Superstition of *Papery*, we cannot suppose, at their first emerging out of that profound Darkness, their Minds were at once compleatly illuminated. Many gross Errors they rejected, some they retained. But the grand Mistake was, after they had drawn Schemes of Faith from the Scriptures, honestly no doubt, and to the best of their Abilities, either they or their Followers, as if they had delivered the whole of Scripture-Truth, without any Mixture of Error, erected those Schemes, though differing very much from one another, into Rules to be universally received. The Scriptures were permitted to be read, but only in the Sense of those Schemes. Any that disputed them were loaded with odious Party-Names, and Christian Professors were again led to disparage and hate, to cast out and separate from one another, on account of Difference in Sentiments; in which yet they could not but differ, seeing that a free and peaceable Study of God's Word was not allowed them. In Protestant Schools, they that were educated for the Ministry, were taught the Doctrine they were to preach, not from the Holy Scriptures, but from Systems of Divinity, after the Model of the *Papish* School-Men, and taken chiefly from them. Their abstract metaphysical Notions, Terms of Art, Divisions and Distinctions were retained,

and still applied to Christian Principles. Among Protestants their several Creeds and Churches were established by the secular Power, and the Magistrate required his People to believe after the particular Confession, or Articles he espoused. Subscription to human Schemes was demanded; *Conventions* and *Committees for preserving the Purity of Faith* were erected; Men were constituted Judges of Scripture-Doctrine for whole Nations and Communities, and Conscience was again made responsible to earthly Tribunals. Worldly Emoluments were annexed to a supposed right Belief, and heavy Penalties inflicted upon Recusants.

This is *PROTESTANT POPERY*—Which, though in some Respect better than the *ROMISH*, is yet more inconsistent, because it renounceth Infallibility, and yet imposeth and persecuteth as if infallible; rejecteth human Authority, and yet in many Cases pleadeth and resteth upon it; lastly, permiteth the Scriptures to be read, but not understood; or, which is all one, to be understood only in the Sense of Schemes formed and established by Men.

This kind of *Popery* in *England* the Dissenters about Ninety Years ago considerably weakened, by refusing Submission to some Forms and Rules prescribed by human Wisdom, and established by human Authority, and by declaring a-new, that the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith and Worship. But still the primitive Dissenters had their own Rules of human Composition, which they supposed were agreeable to Scripture. The School-Divinity was in the same Esteem with them, as with other Protestants; in their Schools it was taught, and by it their Schemes were explained and defended. Their Ministers were not indeed explicitly required by *them* to assent and consent to any prescribed Forms of Faith, saving what are Scriptural;

Scriptural; but yet, by Custom and tacit Consent, some Books, and the Opinions of some Men, passed for the Standards of Orthodoxy; and it was expected Ministers should shape their Doctrine according to them. Thus things went on, till within about Seventy Years; when LIBERTY at the Revolution, O bright, auspicious Day! reared up her heavenly Form, and smiled upon our happy Land. Delivered from the Fears of Tyranny and Persecution, Men begun freely to use their Understandings; the Scriptures were examined with more Attention and Care, and their true Sense, setting aside human Comments, and especially the Jargon and Sophistry of School-Divinity, was sought after. Then some unscriptural Propositions being discovered in the Books and Catechisms, which the Dissenters in Fact, though not in Profession, had made the Rule of Faith, some Ministers begun to vary from them, and false Alarms were spread among the Laity, as if the Fundamentals of Religion were struck at. Within the last Fifty Years, since the Confirmation of LIBERTY by the Accession of the present Royal Family, greater Freedom of Enquiry hath been used, and many among us have generously declared for it*; while others, tenacious of the received Opinions, as stily opposed it. Hereupon some few Congregations have divided; some Ministers, that could not fall in with common Schemes, have been cast out as unfit to officiate in the

* An Instance we have of this in that noble Stand made for Liberty at *Salter's Hall*, in the Year 1720; when in a full Body of Dissenting Ministers in and about *London*, it was put to the Vote, whether Subscription should be required to the Assembly's Catechism, and carried in the Negative. This should always be remembered to their Honour, as being the only Instance, perhaps, that can be produced out of Church-History, for many Centuries, of any Synod of Ministers, declaring in Favour of Religious Liberty.

the sacred Office, though otherwise Men of the first Accomplishments and Characters.

This is *DISSENTING POPERY* — For *Popery* is not mere Error, seeing the best of Protestants may be in Error more or less; but *Popery* is *human Infallibility* and *Persecution*, wherever they are found, whether among *Papists* or *Dissenters*. *Human Infallibility* is making the Judgment or Writings of any Man, or Body of Men, since the Apostles Days, the Rule of Christian Faith, not to be doubted, questioned, or departed from. *Persecution* is any Degree of Hatred, or any Kind of Injury done to those who differ from us in religious Sentiments. And if *human Infallibility* and *Persecution* are found among Protestants in general, and *Dissenters* in particular; it is true, they so far retain a Species of *Popery*, as they ground their Faith upon human Schemes, and hate and injure those that reject them. An Instance of both these Antichristian Principles you have in the following NARRATIVE; wherein you find a Dissenting Minister openly avowing and acting upon them.

The Article, about which he thought fit to exercise his Zeal, he hath delivered in two Propositions. The first, excepting the Words, *all Divine Perfections*, is taken out of the *Assembly's Catechism*, and is this — *Whether there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and whether these three are one God, the same in Substance, and equal in all Divine Perfections and Glory?* The other is — *Whether Jesus Christ is the one, true, supreme God, the same with the Father in Nature, and equal with him in all Divine Perfections?* Which last seemeth to be framed by himself. For it will be difficult to find any Creed or Confession that expressly affirmeth Jesus Christ to be *THE one, true, supreme God*. However, they are both certainly Unscriptural, and can no where be found in the
Sacred

Sacred Writings. But this Gentleman is firmly persuaded they are Articles of the Christian Faith. And, if he chose to think so, it don't appear that any body was inclined to give him any Disturbance, but that he might have enjoyed his Opinions in Peace.

But too true it is, Schemes of Men's own devising are commonly contended for, with great Zeal and Uncharitableness, while Truth passeth on coolly, molested indeed often, but not molesting. Unmolested as this Gentleman was, in a happy Land of Peace and Liberty, he could not rest, but cast an unfriendly Eye upon those he supposed to differ from him; and one of them, unhappily chancing to be within the Sphere of his Influence, felt the genuine Effects of it. He was not sure he was an *Heretick*, but the Man kept Company with *Hereticks*; he is suspected of Heresy; a Plot is laid to detect him; insnaring, unscriptural Questions are proposed to him. Being too honest to answer further than he had a Warrant in Revelation, this Gentleman, too much in the Language of an Inquisitor, insults him, chargeth him with Obstinacy, Stupidity, Blasphemy; sets him in an ill Light before his Fellow-Christians, preacheth inflaming Sermons, brings him to a formal Trial, treats him with Contempt, with Difficulty admits his Defence, neglects it, deters his Friends, by threatening to fix Heresy upon them too, if they appeared on his Behalf; first suspends, and not long after casts him out of the Society as an *Heathen and Infidel*. Further than this, Thanks be to God, he could not go.

With what Mind he reflecteth upon his own Conduct, is best known to himself. But is it possible he should review it without some Remorse? Let every *true* Protestant judge, if this is not the very Spirit of Popery. How could Mr. S. censure,
or

or do the least unkind Thing to a Man, whose Christian Life and Conversation he could not blame? How durst he charge him with Heresy, who professed an hearty Assent to the Word of God, and a sincere Intention to live according to it? How durst he presume to cast a Man out of Christian Communion, who made a full, clear, and unexceptionable Confession of his Faith, according to the Scriptures of Truth? A Confession, in the first Ages of Christianity, sufficient to have intitled him to Fellowship with Apostles, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost? How durst he judge his Brother, or set at nought his Brother? Doth he not, indeed believe, we shall all stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ? And with what Face will he appear before the Lord of Life in that Day, who hath persecuted, and cast out one of his Disciples? What, not one Word of Charity and Forbearance in all the Affair! The only Method by which Christians are directed to govern themselves amidst all their unavoidable Disputes. Not one Hint of brotherly Kindness! Not one Instance of Moderation, Modesty and Lowliness of Mind! What, nothing of the Gospel Minister, but all over Inquisitor, from one End to the other! Will he say it was done in Defence of the Truth? But where hath our Lord, *in such a Case*, given him any Authority *thus* to defend the Truth? They that are of the Truth, are of a Spirit quite different from this. And will he call the aforesaid Propositions the Truth? Do they not stare in his Face as the most glaring Absurdities? How can he persuade himself, that one Person, who is *THE one, true, and supreme God*, should be the same with another distinct Person, who is also *THE one, true, and supreme God*? Doth he not see that it is absurd, that either *the one, true, supreme God* should consist of two Parts, two Persons, or intelligent Beings, or that there should be two, one,

one, true, and supreme God? Will he take Sanctuary in the School-Learning? There indeed this Point, and some others that were connected with it, have been laboured for many Ages down to the present Generation; but only to the multiplying of Absurdity, couched under high swelling Words of Vanity; such as *Essity, Trin-Unity, Quiddity, Quiddity, Formalities, Essentialities, Primalties, Consubstantiality, necessary Emanation, hypostatical Union, mutual Circumplexion, a Trinity of Modes, Communication of Properties, Oeconomical, Co-essential, Co-equal, Co-eternal*. These, Christian, are the barbarous Sounds, unknown to the pure and divine Mouth of thy Saviour, and the inspired Voice of his Apostles; whereby the Principles of thy Religion, in themselves noble and heavenly, simple and plain to every Capacity, have been worked into pompous Nonsense, and profound Darkness. Strange, how hath human Pride exulted in Ignorance, decked with the Tinsel of senseless Terms! Strange, how have Divines, otherwise sober and pious, deluded themselves and others, by the Sorcery of School-Learning! By the bold Suppositions, and idle Whimfies of their own Brains! Will he plead Scripture? But the Scripture saith, *The Son of God emptied and humbled himself; that the Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us; that being rich, for our Sakes he became poor*. And can these Things be true, of THE one, true, and supreme God, who is necessarily unchangeable, and cannot possibly be emptied, humbled, made Flesh, or become poor? That he and the Father are one, the Scripture affirms, *John x. 30.* and clearly explaineth in what Sense they are one, *John xvii. 11, 21, 22. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8.* But that Christ is THE one, true, supreme God, the same in Substance and Nature with the Father, the Scripture no where affirms. On the contrary, the Father, as distinguished from Jesus Christ, is expressly

precisely said to be the only true God, John xvii. 3. And if with hard straining, and far-fetched Deductions, he fancieth he hath found any Thing in Scripture, that favoureth a Notion so repugnant to right Reason, may he not justly suspect that he is deceived, that he errith, not knowing the Scriptures? The Scriptures, through Carelessness, or something worse, may be perverted to the vilest Purposes of Error and Delusion. Should a Man take it into his Head to defend *Transubstantiation*, he may produce Proofs seemingly clearer from Scripture, than this Gentleman for his Proposition. For *Transubstantiation*, there is an express Text in the Letter, *this is my Body*; but let him shew us where it is said, *Christ Jesus is the one, true, supreme God, the same in Substance with the Father*. He that attempts to prove such Contradictions from Scripture, doth but attempt to destroy the Truth of Scripture. Indeed Mr. S. should re-consider his Actions, examine his Heart and his Faith, and if he is so fast bound in the Chains of Prepossession, that he cannot correct his Mistake, he should, however, labour to attain a christian, charitable Spirit.

In this Scene of Persecution he appeareth to have been the Principal; but the Congregation must come in as Accessories. By their Votes, Mr. Rawson, as much as in them lay, was cut off from the Church of God, and the Communion of Saints; and possibly with the same blind Zeal, as *Papists* formerly joined their Priests in the Condemnation and terrible Executions of the faithful Servants of God. For are they sure Mr. Rawson is not a Servant of Jesus Christ? To every unprejudiced Eye he appeareth to be a Man who durst not violate his Conscience, or betray the Truth, either to secure their Favour, or avoid their unkind Usage. And have they abused a Disciple of Jesus Christ, who avowed the Truth of the Gospel, in Opposition

tion to their Ignorance and Ill-will? Do they
 know for what they cast him out? Have they im-
 partially weighed and examined the Point upon
 which he was charged? Have they carefully, and
 without Prejudice, studied and compared the Scrip-
 tures upon this Head? Or do they believe only
 upon the Testimony of Men, and the *Bliss* of Edu-
 cation? Dare they venture their own Salvation,
 upon the Justness of their Conduct in this Affair,
 or the Truth of speculative Points and disputable
 Propositions? For if they have persecuted and cast
 out one of Christ's Disciples, they have certainly
 brought themselves into Danger; and that Text,
Mat. xiii. 6. looks upon them with a dreadful As-
 pect; *who so shall offend one of these little ones who
 believe in me, whoever shall despise or discourage,
 persecute or seduce any of those humble and inno-
 cent Persons, who believe and obey the Gospel,*
*it were better for him that a Millstone were hanged
 about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth
 of the Sea.* Plead not a Profession of Religion;
 say not we did it for God's Glory; imagine not
 that Prayers, religious Exercises, and devout At-
 tendance upon Ordinances, will either annul or
 extenuate the Sin. There have been Men, who
 hated and cast out their Brethren, that trembled at
 God's Word, *for his Name's Sake*; and who in
 perpetrating such horrid impiety said, *Let the Lord
 be glorified*, *Mat. xvi. 5.* Many of those who slew
 the Lord of Life, were great Pretenders to Re-
 ligion, and constant Attendants upon the Temple-
 Service, and could boast they were no Extortioners,
 Unjust, Adulterers; that they fasted twice a Week,
 and gave Tithes of all they possessed. Our
 Saviour, *John xvi. 2.* foretels his Servants would
 be persecuted, not only by the openly profane,
 but by such as would think thereby they did God
 Service;

Service. *And these things* (saith *the Lord*) *will they do continually, because they have not known the Father nor man; should not therefore any one, who wisheth well to this Religious Society, earnestly exhort them to consider, if they have not thus deceived themselves, and made Religion a Governor of Persecution? Let no Man deceive them; there is no true Religion without Charity; for 1 Cor. xiii. Pretend not a Power and Liberty in every Congregation to cast out and take in as they please. Such a Power they undoubtedly have, in Opposition to all human Power, and so far as they touch no Man's Civil Rights; but not in Opposition to Truth, and the Laws of the Gospel; not to tyrannize and domineer over one another's Consciences; not as if they were accountable to no Authority but their own; because they are accountable to no human Authority. They must certainly stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and if they have held up their Hands in an uncharitable Condemnation and Exclusion of a true Disciple, how will they hold up their Hands at that awful Bar? Every one concerned in this Fact, should commune in private with his own Heart upon these things, as he valueth the Life of his own Soul.*

But are these the Principles of the Dissenting Cause? If so, then every one seeth they stand in direct Opposition to Peace, Truth and Liberty, and are calculated only to enslave the Conscience, and to promote Error, Faction and Persecution. And every honest Man will heartily wish such Principles, wheresoever they are found, may, as they certainly will, be entirely demolished. Being contrary to Truth and Charity, the Providence of God will fight against them, to introduce the happy reformation of the Church predicted in the Revelation.

But

But the Error of a few must not be charged upon a whole Body. These are not the Principles of the Dissenting Cause. The Principles of the Dissenters as such are these. *That the Scriptures are the only Rule of Christian Faith; that human Schemes, Creeds and Confessions, Forms and Modes, in Faith or Worship, are to be rejected, if imposed as necessary Terms of Communion; and if otherwise, only to be received at Pleasure, by whomsoever imposed.* The Dissenting Principles are *Liberty, private Judgment, free Enquiry, and free Profession, Peace and Charity, mutual Forbearance, Moderation, and Good-will towards all Mankind.* And these are Principles which Men of the best Sense and Fortunes need not be ashamed to own and espouse. These Principles, which the Dissenters hold in common with all true Protestants, are indeed no other than those of universal Christianity; and will stand as long as there is Truth, Honesty and Humanity in the Earth, or a Good and Almighty God in Heaven.

Infallibility and Persecution are widely remote from the Principles of Dissenters as such; and this Narrative is published, not to expose Mr. Sloss or his Congregation, much less to disparage the Dissenting Cause, but to vindicate and guard it, by holding up this Case before their Eyes, that they may see how much such Practices are a Contradiction to their Profession and avowed Principles, how odious in themselves, and how injurious to true Religion; that unwary Minds may not be deceived into the worst of Crimes, and that this Spirit may not spread among us to our Ruin. And of this, it must be confessed, there is some Danger. A Spirit of *Infallibility and Persecution* is in Fact stirring among us. But for the Love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Truth, which he hath sealed with his own Blood, let us consider what we are doing. Shall we go on thus to debase our Glory? To sink our-

selves into a mean, contemptible Party; a sorry, despicable Faction? Shall we seal up the Lips of Truth, that its divine Voice may no more be heard in our Assemblies? Shall we come at last to the ugly, antichristian Work of ejecting and silencing, even our ablest Men, and our most upright Members? Was it for this our worthy Ancestors so bravely asserted and secured our Civil and Religious Rights? Are not such Methods as these the Way to deter Men from searching the Scriptures, and examining the Principles of their Religion? But then we shall be religious we know not why, and Error once received will be for ever retained; then we shall be reduced to the Principles of Popery, blind implicit Faith, and human Tradition. To what Purpose is our boasted Liberty, if we dare not use it? To what Purpose do we enjoy the Light, if we may not open our Eyes to it? To what Purpose the Word of God, if we must not seek for its real and genuine Sense; but must be tied to the Dictates and Sentiments of any Divines that have been, or now are? How can we, without the grossest Inconsistency, pray in our publick Assemblies, *that the Reformation may be carried on to still greater Degrees of Perfection*; if in our Practice we defeat the very Blessing we desire? What Advantage hath the Dissenter, if not to reform, without the Formalities and Delays of human Laws and Edicts, whatever shall be discovered to be at any Time, or in any Respect, wrong in his Scheme? Why doth he reject human Impositions in one Way, if he tamely submits to them in another? Our Forefathers rejected what they thought was of human Invention; and what we find to be so that escaped them, we, upon their Principles, are to reject; otherwise we only exchange one kind of Bondage for another, and while we refuse Establishments

ments by Law, we shall come under the no less grievous Establishments of Custom.

And if this Spirit is let loose among us, what Ravages will it make in Congregations? What Fires will it kindle? What Animosities, Contentions, and Divisions will it create? How will it lay waste Peace and Love, and Brotherly-kindness, the grand Virtues of the Gospel; go on to spread Deism, and make Christianity, through the false Principles, and inhuman Practices of Christians, the Scorn and Detestation of the World? Thus the very Men, who profess great Zeal for reviving the Power of Religion, will be found the greatest Obstructors of it.

How different from this, how amiable, happy and honourable is the Spirit of the Gospel, Peace, Love, Meekness, Gentleness, Goodness, mutual Forbearance, candid Allowance for Infirmary and Mistake; an honest Endeavour to promote Knowledge, impartial Study and Search of the Scriptures, free Communication, and ready Admittance of what is found in them! These are the Virtues which make us truly Christian; thus we shall grow up into Christ in all Things; thus our Hearts, and in time our Heads too, will be united, as far as the present State of Things will admit; thus Religion will flourish and shine with a charming Lustre in the Eyes of the World.

If the Dissenters stand firm in Liberty and Love; if they list themselves under no other Head and Leader but Christ alone; if they refuse all Party-Schemes, and stand upon the single Basis of universal Christianity; if they allow the free Study of the Bible, and encourage the Labours of their honest and learned Men; if they are stedfastly determined to establish their Faith, Practice, and Worship, upon the Word of God alone, as it shall from time to time be made known unto them; and upon this

Bottom, and no other, have true Affection to one another, and to all Men; then they will act up to their own true Principles. And though they may not be able at once to bring the whole Body of Truth out of Revelation, yet the Day will shine still brighter upon them; and their Cause, thus set upon its proper Basis, will stand, nor shall the Gates of Hell prevail against it. But if ever they abandon *Liberty* and *Love*; if they stiffly adhere to *Party-Names* and *Schemes*; if they set *Bounds* to *Scripture-Knowledge*, and presumptuously say, *Hither shalt thou go, and no further*; if they discourage the *Honest* and *Learned*, that would throw in more *Light* and *Truth* among them, they will become *weak*, and *waste* and *dwindle* into nothing.

The End of the Prefatory Discourse.



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NARRATIVE

OF

Mr. JOSEPH RAWSON'S Case.

M R. *James Sloss*, who is now one of the
 Pastors of the Congregational Church
 at *Nottingham*, when he first came from
Scotland to this Place, boarded at Mr.
Joseph Rawson's House, who has been
 a Member of that Church Twelve Years or more;
 this gave an Opportunity of their frequent convers-
 ing together, and talking freely upon a Variety of
 Subjects.

Mr. *Sloss* leaving his House a considerable Time
 since, and Mr. *Rawson* being brought into Distress,
 and his Affairs into disorder, occasioned by the un-
 happy Conduct of another Person; he was neces-
 sitated to apply to his Creditors, and desire them to
 take the best Composition he was able to pay; and
 in order to bring this about, he was kindly assisted

by a Person of another Society, who was by some esteemed Heretical. This naturally led Mr. Rawson to be more frequently with that Person than heretofore.

May 17th, 1736. Mr. Slofs and one of the Deacons, came to Mr. Rawson's House, and told him, that they suspected he was not Sound; observing he kept company with Hereticks; and at the same Time Mr. Slofs delivered to him a Paper containing the following Question.

Whether there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and whether these three are one God, the same in Substance, and equal in all Divine Perfections and Glory?

Mr. Rawson having read it, asked, *Whether it was expected he should answer in the very same Words of the Question?*

S. If it be in the same Sense, it will do.

R. Suppose I cannot directly answer to your Sense of the Question; must I follow the Dictates of my own Conscience, or play the Hypocrite with God, with you, and with my own Conscience?

S. Follow the Dictates of your own Conscience, to be sure.

R. Suppose I follow the Dictates of my own Conscience, and happen to differ from your Sense of the Question, what would be the Consequence of that?

S. If you differ, then I would as soon communicate with an Heathen, or an Infidel, as with you.

R. Suppose any Dispute should arise upon this Account, who must determine between us, the Society, or a Synod of Ministers?

S. To

• Mr. Sherbrook.

S. To be sure the Church *, for the Church is the first and last Resort in this Country.

Three Days were allowed Mr. Rawson to return his Answer, in which time he waited on Mr. Slofs, and desired his Answer to the following Questions.

1st. *Whether to Christians in general, and to all Protestants in particular, the Scriptures, containing the Old and New Testaments, be the best and only Rule of Faith?*

2d. *Whether the Schemes or Explications of any Men whatsoever, can be of that Use and Authority in Matters of Faith, as the very Words and Expressions of the Scriptures?*

To the first Mr. Slofs writ in answer, Yes,

To the second, as follows.

When Hereticks deny the true Sense of Scripture-words, their assenting to Scripture-words is not a sufficient Mean, by which we can understand their Sentiments to be according to the Word †.

B 4

When

* In this Mr. Slofs conformed to the Rules of the Society, contrary to his Confession of Faith, declared at his Ordination.

† The meaning of this Reply evidently is, That assenting to the Schemes and Explications of Men, is more sufficient than assenting to Scripture-words, to determine, whether Men's Sentiments are according to Scripture. If so, then it followeth, That the Schemes, &c. of Men, are a Rule by which the Sense of Scripture-words is to be tried and judged; and then Scripture-words are not sufficient to ascertain their own Sense; and then the Scriptures have no certain Sense, and consequently are no Rule of Faith, or right Sentiment without the Schemes, &c. of Men; and then the Scriptures are a Rule only so far as they are regulated by another Rule; and then the Scriptures are not the only Rule of Faith, nor in themselves any Rule at all. Which shews Mr. Slofs forgot himself, when he assented to this Proposition, *That the Scriptures are the best and only Rule of Faith.* If he shall say, that he means, Men's assenting to Scripture-words is no Argument they take them right. — True. — But when he

When Mr. Rawson had received these Answers in writing, he gave his Answer to their first Question in the following Manner.

Q. Whether there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

Ans. That there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is what I very believe.

Q. And whether these three are one God?

Ans. And that these three are one, is what I believe.

Q. The same in Substance, and equal in all Divine Perfections and Glory?

Ans. As to being the same in Substance, this is not a Term to be found in my Bible, as applicable to the Almighty; and so I pass that over as a captious

he further implieth, That in order to understand, whether Men take the Words of Scripture right, we must use the Mean of human Schemes, he supposeth evidently, That Scripture-words cannot be reduced to a certain Sense; and consequently, that they are useless and unintelligible, without the Interposition of human Schemes. Which he cannot but see is false, and an high Indignity offered to the Scriptures, and the Author of them, who would never mock us with a discovery of his Grace for the Salvation of all Men, learned and unlearned, which doth not sufficiently explain itself. To what purpose hath God spoken to us by his Son from Heaven, or why hath the Holy Ghost employed his Wisdom to choose proper Words to convey to us the Divine Will, if those Words are not sufficient to that end, without human Schemes? Which Schemes, by the bye, do not agree, but vary much, in giving us the Sense of Scripture. Thus Popish Principles, under what Form soever professed, always turn out in the Ruin of Revelation, and the Advancement of human Wisdom and Authority, above that which is divine.

Upon reading this, Mr. Sless said, *Why don't you add the Word God in your Answer?* Mr. Rawson taking a Bible, said, I will assign you a Reason, and read Rev. xxii. 18. *For I testify unto every Man that heareth the Words of the Prophecy of this Book, if any Man shall add unto these Things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book; and if any Man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this Prophecy, God shall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, &c.*

tious Question. As to being equal in all Divine Perfections and Glory, it is quite above my Understanding; therefore I shall avoid giving any Answer at all, but that of Job. xi. 7.

Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?

These were given to Mr. Sloss, the same Deacon of the Church being present, as when the Question was left; and upon Mr. Sloss's receiving the above written Reply, the Deacon said, Mr. Rawson, why don't you answer?

R. I have given in all the Answer I can, as above.

D. *The meanest Christian in the whole Congregation can give an Answer to this easy and plain Question.*

R. But if there be a Weakness in my Intellects, it is what I cannot help.

S. *You don't think so of yourself, Mr. Rawson. I think you are very obstinate; for you have given in no Answer at all.*

R. It is all the Answer I can give at this Time, to any Question you shall ask me; as for you Mr. Sloss, you have nothing at all to do, but appropriate your whole Time to your Studies. — and you, Sir, have the same Opportunity.

But as for me, I have the Affairs of a great Family to mind; so if you have any further Questions for me, I desire you would leave them with me in writing; and give me a little Time, and then I will answer to the best of my Power.

S. *I think the Man is stupid.*

R. Sir, you may say of me whatever you please.

S. *Well, what would you have us do with this Paper?*

R. Sir, you may do whatever you please with it.

S. *What Use would you have us make of it? Would you have us lay it before the Church; or what must we do with it?*

R. You

R. You may lay it before whom you please, or do whatever you please with it.

D. *Well these Notions are very terrible Things; therefore I shall leave you with this Text, Prov. xxviii. 13. He that covereth his Sins shall not prosper; but whose confesseth, and forsaketh them, shall have Mercy.*

R. I don't know that you lay any Sin to my Charge.

S. Yes, the very greatest of all Sins, even Blasphemy itself, in being guilty of blaspheming the Name of the Son of God. Mr. Rawson, I am very sorry for you, and beg the Lord to direct you.

After these Things, Mr. Sloss preached several Sermons in a particular Strain to spirit up the Society, and went to several and discoursed with them concerning Mr. Rawson.

On June the second, a Vestry was held on this Affair, and Mr. Rawson being there then,—*demand- ed of what, he was accused?*

Who were his Accusers, and who were to be his Judges?

One Member said he had heard so, and so, and so, and so, that Mr. Rawson had said some Words that were not Sound and Orthodox; other Members said also they had heard say, &c.

R. This is only hearsay Evidence, I hope you will not judge me upon that.

S. What need you talk so, Mr. Rawson? You know I have enough from under your own Hand.

R. To that will I appeal.

S. But I have lost it; and after some time added, I gave it to Mr. L—, *

R. Pray Mr. L—, produce it.

L. I have lost it.

R. A Copy of the Question given to me, and my Answer to it, I have in my Pocket.

Mr.

Mr. Rawson then gave the Papers into Mr. Slofs's hand to read, which he allowed to be a true Copy; and Mr. Slofs, and some others, then desired Mr. Rawson to give some other Answer than that contained in the Papers, which he refused; and said, he had some Articles to exhibit against Mr. Slofs, and desired the Brethren once more to meet, and give him the hearing.

Whereupon Mr. Slofs said, *I order you to stand, and stand before us, and not sit after that Manner there.* To which Mr. Rawson answered, *I am not before a Court of Judicature, I therefore sit to assert my Liberty as an Englishman;* and Mr. Rawson asked, *Whether or no the Church had ordered the Question to be put to him?* Mr. Slofs answered *they did not;* and took it upon himself. Mr. Rawson then declared, *that it was arrogant in him so to do.* For which Expression he is by some charged with Ill-manners.

Mr. Rawson then applied himself to the People, and said, *As for you, my Christian Brethren, if any of you are dissatisfied with my Answer, I am willing to give before you a further Confession of my Faith;* and having a written Paper in his Hand, he offered to read it to them, but was refused that Liberty by Mr. Slofs, and others. He entreated several times for an hearing, and was often refused; till, as he was putting his Paper into his Pocket, one of the Brethren said, *it was not fair he should be denied to read it, being upon his Defence, he ought to be heard.* When leave was given, he read as follows:

“ At present it is my settled Judgment, that a
 “ voluntary and hearty Assent to the Truths con-
 “ tained in the Old and New Testament; and a sin-
 “ cere Endeavour to behave in Life and Conversa-
 “ tion, according to the Rules there laid down; are
 “ the only Terms of Communion that Christians
 “ should require one of another.”

Accord-

Accordingly I here publicly before you declare my Belief of the Scriptures, and the Doctrines they contain; but if I can give any further Satisfaction to my Fellow-Christians, I am not ashamed to give an Answer to every one that asketh a Reason of the Hope that is in me, 1 Peter iii. 15.

Therefore I say,

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth — (a)

And I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father, by whom God made all Things (b); who also was made Flesh (c), and suffered Death, giving himself a Ransom for all (d); the third Day he rose again from the Dead (e), and then God gave him all Power in Heaven and Earth (f).

Afterwards he ascended into Heaven (g), and sitteth at the right Hand of God, being made Head over all Things to the Church (h). I believe in the Holy Ghost, who spake to the last great Day of Judgment, let us approve our Conscience to God, and every one of

(a) 1 Cor. viii. 6. But as we have but one God, the Father of whom are all Things. One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things.

(b) Heb. i. 2. By whom also he made the Worlds.

(c) 1 John iv. 2. Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is of God; every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is not of God.

(d) 1 Tim. ii. 6. Who gave himself a Ransom for all.

(e) Matt. xxviii. 6. — For he is risen.

(f) Matt. xxviii. 18. Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all Power is given unto me in Heaven, and in Earth. (Rom. i. 4. declared to be the Son of God, with Power, by the Resurrection from the Dead.)

(g) Acts i. 9. He was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their Sight.

(h) Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. — and set him at his own Right hand, far above all Principalities, &c. and gave him to be Head over all Things to the Church.

"spoke by the Prophets and Apostles of
 "old (1)
 "And that Christ hath a visible Church on
 "the Earth, of which he is the Head (k). I
 "believe the Resurrection of the Body, and
 "a State of Retribution, when Christ shall
 "judge the World in Righteousness (l)."

But Brethren, I say, God forbid that the Christian Religion should ever be propagated by Force or Persecution, which doth not consist in a feigned or hypocritical Profession, but in a sincere and undisssembled Faith. And therefore as no one ought to assume to himself the Power of judging concerning it, but God the Searcher of Hearts, to him only let us leave it to pass a true Judgment concerning every Man's Belief. Let us in the mean while detest Tyranny, and strive to reduce those who, in our Judgment, hold Errors, into the way of Truth, by the good Offices of Charity and Benevolence, without arrogating to ourselves a Judgment over the Consciences of others; and out of a serious Regard to the last great Day of Judgment, let us approve our Consciences to God, and every one of us expect from his Mercy an equitable and righteous Judgment; pray without ceasing.

When he had done reading, and laid down the Paper, one present said, *it would bear a second reading*; but the Paper was put into his Hand to read to himself; for they would not suffer it to be read any

(i) 1 Pet. i. 21. *Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

John xvi. 13. *When he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.*

(k) Eph. iv. 5. *One Lord.*

John xiii. 35. *All Men shall know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one towards another.*

(l) Acts. xvii. 31. *He will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained.*

any more, but laid it upon the Table, and took no further notice of it; for Mr. Slofs called out to proceed to Suspension. Then Mr. Rawson desired to know, if that was the Sense of the People? Mr. Slofs sternly answered, *that if any one appeared for him, they would give the greatest suspicion they were equally guilty; and desired, they would proceed to a Vote, to see if Mr. Rawson did not deserve Suspension from Communion, or the lesser Excommunication, as he called it.*

Mr. Rawson demanded a Proof of their Authority to suspend. Mr. B—n the other Pastor answered, *it had been a Custom in that Church for Twenty Years.* Mr. Rawson replied, *if Custom be a sufficient Proof of Authority, then the Church of Rome might be justified in all her erroneous Practices; for that she could plead Custom for more than twice twenty Years: And suppose he should be suspended, would they look on him as a Brother?* Mr. B—n answered, *Yes.* Then said Mr. Rawson, *If I be a Brother, I have a Right to all the Privileges of a Brother; and so I intend to communicate with you on Lord's-Day next, to assert both my Right and my Clarity.*

Here Mr. Slofs called out aloud for the Assistance of the Civil Magistrate, three several Times, and made Application to a Gentleman there present, who is Son-in-law to the present Mayor of the Town, to have the Magistrate's Assistance; and further said, *Come, come, don't let us binder ourselves by hearing him talk any longer;—pray Mr. B—n what is the Custom?—let us proceed.*

Accordingly the Votes of those present were taken, and it was carried, *That Mr. Rawson should be suspended from Communion; sixteen Yea's to four No's.* And also further put to the Vote, and carried, *That he should withdraw while the Suspension was pronounced.* And Mr. Slofs, in a magisterial Manner, ordered him to withdraw, which he refused to do; pleading, *that the worst of Criminals were allowed to be present,*
whilst

whilst Judgment was pronounced against them. But Mr. Sloss answered with an haughty Air, That he ought to be turned out for sitting in Contempt of the Church; and then said, Mr. Rawson, you are now suspended from all the Privileges of this Church, till you shew Repentance, and the Congregation think proper to receive you again.

The next Day Mr. Mayor sent for Mr. Rawson, and threatened him with the Penalty, or Imprisonment upon Non-Payment, if he gave the Church any Disturbance, by offering to communicate; or if he made any Disturbance, if they refused to offer him the Cup. To which he answered, *That as his Wife would sit next him, and she did not think him an unworthy Member, she would give him the Cup if he came.*

These Threats not producing the desired Effects, Mr. Rawson's Relations were applied to; and by their Persuasions, and those of an old Gentleman, for whom he had a great Value, Mr. Rawson promised to withdraw, and not communicate with them the next Day; upon Condition the same Question might be put to some other Member of the same Church, which was then promised to be done.

Some time after this, Mr. Rawson had notice given him to attend the Vestry again, which, he accordingly did.

And now they laid something of Misbehaviour to his Charge, particularly at the late Vestry, in not standing at Mr. Sloss's Command, and not leaving the place when he was ordered; and after some short Discourse on that Head, Mr. Sloss dictated the following Question, which was then written by one of the Deacons, and given to Mr. Rawson to answer in a Week's time.

*Whether Jesus Christ is the one, true, supreme God,
the same with the Father in Nature, and equal
with*

with him in all Divine Perfections? Which Question to be answered in any Words Mr. Rawson pleases to express himself in, provided they come up to a sound Sense and Meaning.

Mr. Rawson desired a longer time, but was denied—therefore at the time appointed, and when they met again, he read and delivered the following.

My FRIENDS,

“ I ACKNOWLEDGE the Goodness and Favour of
 “ Almighty God, and esteem it as an inestimable Blessing, that he hath pleased to give us his
 “ written Word, which his own infallible Spirit
 “ hath dictated, to be to us a perfect Rule of Faith
 “ and Practice. I would by no Means neglect this
 “ Rule, but endeavour to understand it as far as I
 “ am able; and according to my Ability and Knowledge, I answered the first Question put to me;
 “ and also gave a further Account of my Faith, as
 “ I thought agreeable to the Scriptures: For far be
 “ it from me, to think my Words, or the Words
 “ of any fallible Men, comparable to the Word of
 “ God; I hoped as a Christian, and a Protestant,
 “ hereby to have given you all the Satisfaction you
 “ desired, and as none of you have been so kind, if
 “ I have erred, to shew me wherein I have mistaken
 “ the Scriptures, I think the second Question is designed rather to perplex than instruct and edify me.
 “ But, dear Christians, consider that Pastors and
 “ Teachers are given for the perfecting of the
 “ Saints, for the Work of the Ministry (a), and
 “ not to dote about Questions and Strife of
 “ Words (b).
 “ Therefore, as I am not a Man of Letters, I
 “ desire Mr. Slofs to give me in writing now before
 “ fore

(a) Eph. iv. 12.

(b) 1 Tim. vi. 4.

fore you, an Explanation of the Words, in Nature; which he uses in his second Question. And then, if you desire it, I will, as far as I can learn from Revelation, answer his Question.

Mr. Sloss said, *This was only trifling, and they were not to be trifled with*; denying to give him in writing any Explication or further Information. Upon which Mr. Rawson read his Answer to the Question.

Q. Whether Jesus Christ is the one, true, supreme God?

Ans. There is but one, true, supreme God, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (c).

Q. The same with the Father in Nature?

Ans. The same in Nature, I don't find in the Scriptures, as applicable to Father and Son jointly.

— But I believe him to be the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person (d).

Q. And equal with him in all divine Perfections?

Ans. This latter Part being the same with my first Question, and above my Understanding, I shall give the same Answer as I did before, saying with Job, Chap. xi. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?*

Mr. Sloss saying, *Now he begins to speak out*; Mr. Rawson replied, *If you mean I begin to speak out Heresy, take care upon whom you charge your Heresy; for the Words I have made use of, are the Words of the Apo-*

(c) 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. *For though there be that are called Gods, to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things.*

(d) Heb. i. 2, 3. — *By his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things, by whom also he made the Worlds; who being the Brightness of his Glory, and express Image of his Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power.*

Me Paul, who spoke by the Direction of the infallible Spirit of God. And then Mr. Rawson retired.

The next Day two of the Deacons acquainted Mr. Rawson, that the Church had determined to exclude him; and ordered him to attend the next Friday, viz. July 9, to hear that Sentence pronounced upon himself, and left him with these Words—*The Lord help you.*

Mr. Rawson did not attend them at that Vestry, considering that, when they had voted him to be suspended from Communion, they also ordered him to be absent whilst they pronounced that Suspension; and upon his refusing to withdraw, the next Vestry they charged him with Misbehaviour; and the same Difficulty might again arise: He sent the following Letter.

Dear CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

“ I HAVE seriously thought on the Message
 “ brought from the Church last *Saturday* Morn-
 “ ing, and as those Questions, that have been put
 “ unto me, were not made the Terms of Commu-
 “ nion when I was taken into Church-Fellowship
 “ with you, but have been since brought in by a
 “ Stranger, who is striking at the very Foundation
 “ of the Congregational Church; I therefore desire
 “ more time. For if you would draw up Articles
 “ to subscribe, after due and serious Consideration,
 “ I will sign any thing you shall draw up, if possi-
 “ bly I can. If you will comply with this my Re-
 “ quest, I do assure you, I will not give you any
 “ trouble the next Sacrament-Day. From your af-
 “ flicted and prosecuted Brother in distress.”

Joseph Rawson.

Mr. Rawson having no Answer to this Letter, went to a Member of the Church a Day or two after,

after, to know what Determination they had come to, who told him, *they had proceeded to Excommunication*; to which Mr. Rawson answered, *that the Church had not acquainted him with it in any way*; and desired that Member, to go to the Deacons, and get him a Copy of what they had charged him with, and the Form of the Excommunication itself.

Upon this, two of the Deacons came to Mr. Rawson's House, and told him, *that he was Excommunicated*; but they refused to give him a Copy of any Part of their Proceedings.

Then Mr. Rawson went to several of the Members, and pressed them very hard for a Copy, alleging, *that no Reason being publickly assigned for his Excommunication, he was left to the Invention or Malice of an ill-natured World, to suppose Crimes against him, such as Fancy or Malice might invent to asperse him.*

To which one of the Deacons said, *that Mr. Slofs was against his having a Copy, because he suspected he would shew it to the World, as he had done other things that had passed.* Mr. Rawson replied, *That he was glad to find at last, that they began to be ashamed of such their Proceedings*; and soon after sent them the following Letter.

SIRS,

“ THE Design of this, is not only to complain of the Treatment I have met with,
“ but to expostulate with you about the Encouragement you have given to the unchristian Temper
“ and Proceedings of Mr. Slofs.

“ Consider what he hath done, that can be of
“ any Advantage to your Society, or Christianity
“ In general, when his Behaviour towards me comes
“ to be made publick to the World.

“ Pray make it your own Case, and suppose
“ Mr. Slofs to have entertained an Opinion, that
“ any one of you is Heretical, as to acknowledg-

ing the Deity of the Son of God, (which he may as well do to you, as myself, who heartily believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, as delivered in the Scriptures.)

And he, instead of following the Advice of the Apostles †, to convert and restore you, gives you Questions to answer in writing, refusing to write down any Explanation of the Terms used in his Question.

And declaring he would as soon communicate with an Heathen or an Infidel as you, if you don't answer in his Sense, though he had given it under his Hand, that the Scriptures were the best and only Rule of Faith and Practice.

And suppose he was to question all the Members of your Church in the same Manner, what would be the Consequence?

If you searched the Scriptures in order to return an Answer (as I have endeavoured to do) you will meet with the same Treatment as me, except Mr. *Sloss* shews respect of Persons.

If you are so happy as to happen upon his Sense, then you are to be esteemed Orthodox with him; as if speaking of Words, or emitting Sounds, without meaning, qualified for Communion in a Christian Society.

I indeed answered his Questions as far as I understood them, as near as I could in Scripture-Language, hoping thereby to avoid giving Offence to him, and at the same time the easier Satisfaction to you.—But I found myself mistaken.

Instead of shewing wherein I had misunderstood the Scriptures, or in what particular I was erroneous, Mr. *Sloss* pronounces me an Heretick; and you (implicitly I believe) agree with him, without considering, that if I had erred, it might be such an Error as a conscientious Man, who holds

“ holds the Scriptures to be the Rule of his Faith
 “ and Practice, might fall into; or it might be my
 “ simple Mistake, through want of Learning, and
 “ the weakness of human Understanding. If this
 “ be the Case, then to judge me Heretical, was
 “ most unjust and uncharitable.

“ And pray what Advantage does Mr. *Slofs*
 “ bring to Christianity? Or does he by these Prac-
 “ tices set off the Principles of the Dissenters in
 “ any becoming Light?

“ Does he follow the Example of the blessed
 “ Jesus, the Lord and Institutor of our Holy Re-
 “ ligion; the Searcher and Knower of the Hearts
 “ of all Men; who admitted even a *Judas* to
 “ Communion, when Satan had entred into his
 “ Heart, and he had agreed with the Priests to be-
 “ tray his Master?

“ He who finds out the Man that had been blind,
 “ and comforts him when the *Jews* had cast him
 “ out, or excluded him for not answering in their
 “ Sense?

“ He who, in the Parable of the Tares, restrains
 “ his over-officious Servants from being too busy in
 “ rooting up the Tares (which whilst they slept, the
 “ Enemy had sown) giving them to understand,
 “ that it were not they, but the Angels that were
 “ appointed to that Office; neither was that the
 “ time, but the End of the World, that the good
 “ Seed was to be separated from the bad?

“ He who rebuked his Disciples (with saying,
 “ *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of,*) for their desire
 “ of punishing the *Samaritans*, who indeed refused
 “ Christ; and were Hereticks and Idolaters, and
 “ erred in Matters of Salvation, worshiping they
 “ knew not what?

“ And how do these things that have lately been
 “ transacted, agree with the New Commandment

" of our Lord and Saviour, and the rest of the
 " Precepts of Forbearance in the Gospel ?

" Don't they rather tend to destroy the natural
 " and common Bonds of social Affection amongst
 " Relatives, and our Fellow-Creatures ? And to
 " countenance all Persecution, even that of the
 " Church of *Rome* ; which in Words you would
 " seem to disallow, but in fact follow some of her
 " Methods of reclaiming ?

" Review the whole, and think what Motive, but
 " Pride could move Mr. *Sloss* to act in the Man-
 " ner he has done ; and what, but Inconsideration,
 " could lead you to join him.

" If I have erred, who of you have endeavoured
 " to convince me of it, or even shew me wherein ?

" I would always be open to Conviction, and no
 " ways tenacious of my own Opinion ; but at pre-
 " sent am not conscious of any Error, unless it be,
 " that I am so unhappy as not to have hit Mr.
 " *Sloss's* Sense. And yet it is a Question with me,
 " whether I might not accuse Mr. *Sloss* of Heresy,
 " who after he has allowed the Scriptures to be the
 " best and only Rule of Faith and Practice, sets
 " up his own Sense, as a Standard for you and me,
 " acting as if he was infallible, though perhaps he
 " will not pretend to it.

" By him I am censured, and by you I hear am
 " excluded from Communion. But I bless God,
 " that hath said by St. Paul, *That if thou shall con-
 " fess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe
 " in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the
 " Dead, thou shalt be saved.*

" But I leave what I have said to your serious
 " Consideration, hoping you will, like Men of
 " Integrity, review what you have done, and lay
 " aside all Prejudice."

Yours, &c.

JOSEPH RAWSON.

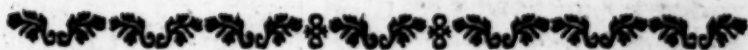
A FURTHER
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OF THE
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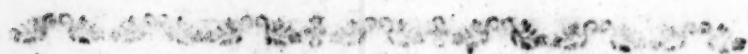
And of the

SUFFICIENCY and PERFECTION of
SCRIPTURE, without the Aid
of Human Schemes, Creeds, Con-
fessions, &c.

Occasioned by

Mr. SLOSS's pretended True Narrative of the
Case of JOSEPH RAWSON, who was excom-
municated by the Congregation of PROTE-
STANT DISSENTERS, meeting in *Castle-gate,*
Nottingham.





A FURTHER
DEFENCE
OF THE
COMMON RIGHTS

CHRISTIAN

AND

of Liberty and Perfection of
SOCIETY, without the Aid
of Human Schemes, Cereals, Con-
ditions, &c.

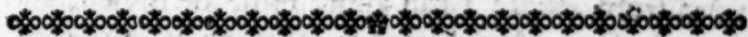
Original by

Mr. Storr's pretended Narrative of the
Case of Joseph Rawson, who was exam-
ined by the Congregation of Protest-
ants, &c. meeting in 1781-2.





A FURTHER
 D E F E N C E
 OF THE
 COMMON RIGHTS
 OF
 CHRISTIANS, &c.



SUCH is the natural Imperfection of our Minds, or Revelation itself is wisely so ordered, for the Exercise of our Integrity, that Religion, as well as other things, may be mistaken, and made the Subject of Dispute and Contention. But to have our Principles settled upon the Foundation of Truth, is of the last Importance to the right Conduct of Life, and a well established Peace of Conscience. Therefore in religious Contests, he that is wise will not be hasty in giving his Assent. He will judge for himself, and he will judge freely and coolly, laying aside all Prejudice and Party-Zeal. He will keep his Eye steadily upon Revelation, and will regard no Arts a Man may use, nor any Airs he may assume; since Error may be covered with plausible Colours, and things may be asserted,

asserted, with great Assurance, upon Grounds very weak and uncertain. Every one seeth this Conduct is just; and I desire the Reader would observe it, while I am making a few Reflections upon Mr. *Slofs's True Narrative*.

The Names, *Arians* and *Heretics*, this Gentleman hath currently applied to such as cannot fall in with his two Propositions, concerning our blessed Lord and Saviour, *Jesus Christ*. This is addressing the Foibles and Prepossessions of Mankind, and may do Execution among the Unthinking. But giving bad Names, is a poor old-fashioned way of arguing; and the most vulgar Tongue may be fluent enough in such kind of Eloquence. About Fourteen Hundred Years ago, lived one *Arius*, a Presbyter of *Alexandria*; from him his Adversaries coined a Name of Distinction and Reproach, which hath been continued to this Day. If Mr. *Slofs's* Design is to insinuate, that those who cannot assent to his two Propositions, take their Notions from *Arius*: I can assure him, for myself, and several of my Acquaintance, that he is mistaken. We do honestly endeavour to build our Faith concerning the Son of God entirely upon the Scriptures of Truth, without any Regard to *Arius*, or any other Man whatsoever, since the *Apostolic* Times. And while we do so, with a sincere View to discover and practise the Truth, I do not see what Right he hath to call us *Heretics*; a Name which hath been long and wretchedly misapplied to those who reject human Schemes and Authority, and build their Faith solely upon the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

Reason is the Light of the whole Universe, the Perfection of the Divine Perfections; without which the Existence of God would be of no Use, and his Power a blind, ungoverned Force. He, the most High GOD, could neither be wise, nor holy, nor just, nor good, nor true, were he void of Understanding and Reason. And, with Regard
to

to ourselves, Reason is the first of God's Gifts, the fundamental Blessing, without which, any other Benefit, how great soever in itself, could neither be understood nor improved. *Revelation, the Influences of the Spirit of God, the future Reward, and Glory*, all suppose the Powers of Reason, and the right Application of them; therefore a Man of Thought can never see Occasion for disparaging Reason. And it is very odd an Author should write for Proof and Conviction, and yet begin, as Mr. *Sless* doth, with decrying Reason; as if, without the Exercise of it, he could explain his Subject, or his Reader see the Truth of his Assertions. But some Men find their Account in this absurd way of writing. Reason, which is the Glory of the Universe, is a frightful Spectre to them; and, whenever it appears in the Controversy before us, giveth them the greatest Pain, as it clearly discovereth the Inconsistency of their Principles. Therefore they level all their Artillery against it, and load it with the opprobrious Names of *corrupt Reason, delusive Light, vitiated Reason*; and would persuade us to wink hard, and renounce our Understanding, for fear of being misled. But how this can be a proper Mean of safe Direction, in Matters of Faith, is past my Comprehension. The Means of any Kind must be of the Sort with the End. Understanding is the End of reading the Scriptures, *Acts viii. 30. Understandest thou what thou readest?* And that Understanding must be gained in the Use and Illumination, not in the Disuse and Darkening of our rational Powers. Therefore *Christ opened the Understanding* of his Disciples, *that they might understand the Scriptures*, *Luke xxiv. 45.* And, *The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of him enlighteneth the Eyes of our Understanding*, *Eph. i. 17, 18.* For how we should understand Divine Truths without our Reason and Understanding, is impossible

ble to conceive. On the contrary, it is evident enough to impartial Judges, that the Neglect of Reason hath been the Source of all Corruption in Religion. For when Christians were once prevailed with to resign their Understandings, they laid themselves open to all Manner of Delusion. Then the subtle or ignorant Priest practised all Manner of Sorcery upon their Consciences, and they were duly prepared to swallow down the most absurd Doctrines, and to give into the most stupid Superstition; then they lost all just Conceptions of God, and his Dispensations, and were incapable of performing that reasonable Service he requireth. *If the Light that is in us be Darknes, how great is that Darknes!* Never could Christianity have been so wofully depraved, had not Christians tamely resigned their Reason to human Authority, and submitted their Understandings to the Dictates of the Priest. *That* laid the Foundation of the Craft, and by that alone it is supported. Do but resolve to see with your own Eyes, and the delusive Scene vanisheth. This the Defenders of old Errors are well apprized of; and therefore, as the best Means of guarding them, wisely persuade us to renounce our Reason in order to encrease our Faith.

But Mr. Slofs informs the World, That the *Scriptures were laid aside by many, as doubtful and obscure, and human Reason substituted in their Room*, p. 2. He is speaking of *Arians*, and every Body will understand where he intends this heavy Censure should be fixed; as well as that, p. 3. — *forbidding all Regards to the Revelations of Heaven, and suppressing the Exercise of Faith entirely in religious Matters*. This is mere Calumny. In this he hath done us much wrong, but himself a great deal more. *I pray God it may not be laid to his Charge*. With what Face of Argument, or Probity, could he so much as insinuate such an Accusation; when
from

from my *Prefatory Discourse**, he transcribeth into his own, the very Words whereby I declare, *The Scriptures to be the great Rule of our Religion; and that the Gospel is a most noble Scheme of Truth and Salvation, highly worthy of the Majesty, Wisdom, and Goodness of God?* Page 4. Who could have a greater Regard to the Scriptures than the late learned and pious Dr. Clarke? And in how clear and convincing a View hath he set the *Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity*, in his famous Book upon that Subject! Let the pretended *Orthodox* produce any Book, ancient or modern, with such a Cloud of Witnesses from Scripture, no less than Twelve Hundred and Fifty Texts, ranged in just Order, reflecting the strongest Light upon one another, and the whole demonstrating the Truth, upon this Subject, to the meanest Capacities. Let them produce a Book written on their Side the Question, upon the same Foot of scriptural Evidence, and then we will allow them to boast. But such a scriptural Explication of their Principles, they never attempted, they never were able, they never will be able to execute. Their Principles will not bear such a Method, but would inevitably be confounded by it. For whoever undertaketh fully to explain this Doctrine from Scripture, must take the very same Texts that Dr. Clarke hath taken; and, if he rangeth them in any just Order, the same Truth for Substance, will result, that he hath deduced from them. If Mr. Slofs himself should collect all the Texts where the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* are spoken of, and should reduce them to their proper Heads, he would, in spite of himself, establish what he weakly calls the *Arian Sense*. He knows plain, pure Scripture will not serve his Cause,

* Note, There is nothing mine in *J. Rawson's Narrative*, but the *Prefatory Discourse*, and the Note upon Mr. Slofs's Answer to Mr. Rawson's second Question, p. 23.

Cause, and therefore he contends so warmly for human *Creds and Confessions*. But there is a Piece lately written with great Candor and Judgment, particularly for the Use of Mr. *Slofs*, I mean, the *Remarks upon his Sermons*. I suppose he hath read it, and, if with a right Disposition of Mind, not without Thanks to the Author, for pointing out to him so ingenuously his Mistakes; nor without some Concern, that he hath so rashly charged those who differ from him upon this Article, *with forbidding all Regards to the Revelation of Heaven, &c.* For there the worthy and ingenious Author hath given such an incontestable Proof of our Regards to Scripture, and such a solid Explication of the Texts relating to this Controversy, as Mr. *Slofs* may justly despair of confuting. It is a valuable Performance, and will be of great Use to any who are desirous of understanding the true Principles of the Christian Faith.

It is the known, general, and public Profession of those whom Mr. *Slofs* invidiously calls *Arians*, that the Scripture, the Revelation of *Jesus Christ*, is the only Rule of Faith to every Christian. According to his own Command, we call *Christ*, and *Christ* alone, our Master. So far are we from *setting the Scriptures aside as doubtful and obscure*, that we constantly, and with one Voice, appeal to them, as the plain, certain and infallible Standard of Truth, by which we are sure all our Sentiments may, and we are willing they should, be fairly tried; desiring no other Favour of those, who unjustly make themselves our Adversaries, than that we and they may be judged and determined by the plain, obvious Sense of Scripture, and the whole Tenor of Revelation.

Neither do we *substitute human Reason in the Room of Scripture*. We are sensible of the great Benefit
of

of a Revelation, and thankful for the Light God hath caused to shine in our Darkness, which we are sure could never have been struck out by any human Wisdom, much less by the Wisdom of a corrupt and degenerate World. Indeed, on the one Hand, we do not suppose Revelation, which contains the most excellent Knowledge, is intended to supersede the Use of our rational Powers, nor, without a careful serious Application of them, do we expect to find the true Sense of Scripture; yet, on the other Hand, *such just Regard have we to Revelation*, that in things we could no other way come to the Knowledge of, we dare use no Terms of Art, coined by human Wit; such as the *undivided Essence of the Deity, subsisting in three distinct Persons, Consubstantiality, necessary Emanation, mutual Circumplexion, hypostatical Union, &c.* ways of speaking which the Spirit of God never taught us, and which neither Mr. *Slofs* nor any other Man ever did, or can understand. But we adhere closely to the Words and Phrases of Scripture, which we believe do fully and sufficiently express the Truth intended to be conveyed to our Minds. *Such are our Regards to Revelation*, that we dare not indulge ourselves in framing unscriptural Suppositions, as the pretended *Orthodox* do, who have, upon this Article, forged no small Number of the most wild and incoherent *Hypotheses*, without any Foundation in the Word of God, or the Nature of things. Having once forsaken the only Rule of Truth, they act over again the same Folly with the old Corrupters of natural Religion, and become vain in their Imaginations. Whereas we are content with what is plainly revealed, and dare neither add nor diminish, from the Fund of our own Invention. *Such Regard have we to Revelation*, that we found our Explications of it, not upon the Figments of our own Heads, but upon the express Authority of *Jesus Christ*, submitting our Reason

Reason and Understanding to be informed and enlightened by his Divine Instructions; not upon any forced Sense of Words, but upon the easy, natural, and obvious Meaning of Scripture, fairly compared with Scripture; so that any Persons of common Sense may plainly see the Truth in its full and just Light, would they but read, think, and judge without Prejudice. Give me Leave to propose one single Instance. Granting that disputable Text, *1 John v. 7. There are three that bear Record, or Witness, in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one*: The Question is, In what Sense are *these Three one*? It is in the Greek, *these three are a one Thing*. How *one Thing*? As the Argument here turns upon a Scripture Mode of Speech, search the Scriptures and you will find Six other Places, and no more, in the *New Testament*, where this Manner of Expression is applied to two or more Persons, affirming that they are *one*; namely, *Eph. ii. 14. 1 Cor. iii. 8. John xvii. 11, 21, 22. — x. 30.* Carefully weigh and compare these Places, and you will see the Sense clearly and fully determined by Scripture-Evidence. Let us begin with *Eph. ii. 14. — ver. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in Times past Gentiles in the Flesh, &c. — ver. 12. that at that Time ye, Gentiles, were without Christ; being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, &c. — ver. 13. But now in Christ Jesus ye Gentiles, who sometime were afar off, out of the Pale of God's visible Church, are made nigh, are taken into his Church and Covenant, by the Blood of Christ; ver. 14. For he is our Peace, it is he who reconcileth us Gentiles to the Jews, who hath made both, Jews and Gentiles, a one.* What? In Substance and Essence? Do we Gentiles, and the Jews, as many Thousands of Persons as we are, subsist but in one Substance, &c. Nothing can be more extravagant. But *Christ hath made both one, as he hath*

hath laid the Foundation of our *Union*, by taking down the Partition Wall, which kept the *Jews* and *Gentiles* at a Distance, and so hath made us one spiritual Body, or Church, in the Unity of Faith, Privileges, Worship, &c. As it is in the next Verse, ver. 15. *making in himself of twain one new Man*; and ver. 16. *reconciling both unto God in one Body*. This, I think, can admit of no Dispute. Now turn to 1 Cor. iii. 8. — ver. 4. *For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?* ver. 5. *Who then is Paul, or who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, &c.* ver. 6. *I have planted the Gospel first among you, Apollos watered, he came afterward and further instructed you in it, but God gave the Increase.* ver. 7. *So then, neither is he, Paul, that planteth any Thing, neither he, Apollos, that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.* Ver. 8. *Now he, Paul, that planteth, and he, Apollos, that watereth, are in one.* How? In Substance or Essence? As if these two Men had but one Substance, &c. in which both their Persons subsisted. But one Body, and one Soul belonging to them both, in which both of them lived and acted. That is impossible. How then were *Paul* and *Apollos* one? Evidently as they had the same Commission, from the same Lord, as they agreed in the same Work, preached the same Gospel, for the same End. They two in their Labours among the *Corinthians* were *all one*, in Opposition to those who would have separated them, and made them Heads of different Sects, as if they differed in their Doctrine. This will admit of no Doubt. — Now take *John* xvii. 21. — ver. 20. *Neither pray I for these, my Apostles, alone, but for them also that shall, at any Time, believe on me through their Word*; ver. 21. *That they may all be in one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in one in us.* What? One Substance,

or Essence? Surely no. But *one*, as they are all united to *Christ*, and to one another, in the Bond of Faith, Holiness and Charity; even as the Father and Son are united in Truth and Love, and mutual Concurrence. — Another Text is *John* x. 30.—*ver.* 27. *My Sheep bear my Voice, &c.* *ver.* 28. *And I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hands, or frustrate the Design of their Salvation.* *Ver.* 29. *And were it possible my Power should fail, my Father, who gave them me, is greater than ALL, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* *Ver.* 30. *I and my Father are in one.* What? One Substance or Essence? So that the Father and the Son, though they are two different Persons, or intelligent Agents, as much as *Paul* and *Apollas*, have, notwithstanding, but one individual Substance or Essence betwixt them, in which they subsist, live and act. Learning misapplied by Prejudice and Prepossession, will darken the clearest Light. But this must appear absurd in the last Degree to an unbiassed Judgment, *I and my Father are one.* That is, my Father concurreth and acteth with me in the Salvation of good Men. *I came not of myself, but he sent me. I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. I am not alone, because the Father is with me. He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those Things that please him. I do nothing of myself.* *John* viii. 16, 28, 29. xvi. 32. *q. d.* “I have a strict Regard to, and faithfully execute his Will, and he approveth what I do, and will assuredly stand by me in it, and will make good that eternal Life, which I have promised to all who obey my Doctrine.” This is plainly our Saviour's Argument. And this, Reader, is the solid and immutable Foundation of our Christian Faith and Hope. Here we may securely rest our Souls, and all our most valuable Interests; being firmly

firmly persuaded, that the Promise of Eternal Life, which *Jesus*, the faithful and true Witness, hath given us, will be executed to the full. For by the Father's Commission he acted, and the Father's Power and Goodness will concur with him in executing all the high and glorious Designs of Redemption. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again to a lively Hope,* 1 Pet. i. 3.

Now, by comparing all these Places together, it appears clearly enough, that when two or more Persons are said to be *one*, the Meaning is, not in Substance or Essence, but in Affection, Agreement, Work or Design. As Gen. xi. 6. *The Lord said, Behold, the People is one.* — “But is it thus to be applied to the Persons in the Trinity?” — Yes. For our blessed Lord himself hath given us this Rule of Interpretation with his own Mouth, expressly, fully, certainly, clearly, without any Difficulty or Obscurity, in John xvii. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thy Name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be in one, as we are.* — Ver. 21. *That they all may be in one, as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be in one in us, &c.* Ver. 22. *And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be in one, even as we, the Father and the Son, are in one.* Which infallibly shows (if he be infallible, who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life) that the Father and the Son are one in the same Sense as Christians are one with Christ, and with one another. Not by an Union or Sameness of Substance or Essence, but of Affection, Agreement, and Design. Here let him that readeth lay his Hand upon his Heart, and seriously consider, Whether he can reject this Interpretation without rejecting the DOCTRINE and AUTHORITY of CHRIST.

In all these Places the very same Manner of Expression is used as in 1 John v. 7. *These three are one.*

And thus these three are proved by the fullest and most undoubted Evidence of Scripture to be *one*, not in *Substance* or *Essence*, as if all three were but one *God*, one *Divine Being*; but one in *Agreement* and *Design*, viz. in bearing Witness; for that is the particular Work the Text speaks of. And these being all the Places in Scripture, where two or more Persons are said to be *one*, in the Words of the Text, this must be the Sense of it; or, however, no other can from Scripture be proved to be the Sense. For whoever goeth fairly to work, must take those Passages where the same Phrase is used; and he can take no other but those I have produced. And I leave every body to judge, whether he can, in just Construction, possibly take them in any other Sense. I think not.

But it may be alledged: — “Unity of Agreement
 “is intended in the next Verse, — *And these three*
 “*agree in one*. But there the Apostle useth a different way of Expression from that in the 7th Verse.
 “In ver. 7. it is, ἐν ἑαῖς, *are one*: In ver. 8. ἐκ τῶ
 “ἐν ἑαῖς, *are into, unto, or for one Thing*. Now,
 “if the Sense be the same in both, and denotes
 “Unity of *Agreement*, why are the Phrases different? And if the Phrases are different, is not the
 “Sense also different?” *Ans.* The Sense of the
 7th Verse is incontestably established by parallel Scriptures; and the different Manner of Expression in ver. 8. is even a further Confirmation of that Sense, by the same Testimony of Scripture-evidence; as appears from Places, which in the like different way of Expression are parallel to those we have been examining. Thus the same Idea, in Effect, which the Apostle expresseth, *Eph. ii. 14. Who hath made both Jews and Gentiles one*, is expressed by ἐκ τῶ, *into one*, John xi. 52. *And not for that Nation of the Jews only, but that also he should gather together ἐκ τῶ, into one, the Children of God that are scattered*

tered abroad [among the *Gentiles*.] *is one*, and gathering them *εἰς ἓν, into one*, do not differ from, but explain each other. — Again — The same Idea which our blessed Lord thus expresseth, *John xvii. 22. That they may be εἰς ἓν, as we are εἰς ἓν*, he expresseth in the next Verse by *εἰς ἓν, into one*. Ver. 23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect εἰς ἓν, in one, or into one*. Which in Sense doth not differ from the former, but is explanatory of it. And these two being the only Passages in the *Greek Testament*, which, in the like different way of Expression, are parallel to the two Verses under Consideration, they must be decisive of the Sense; and I am persuaded no man can, from Scripture-harmony, shew any other Way of settling it. I conclude then, that the different Phrases, ver. 7. *these three, εἰς ἓν, are one*, in Agreement; and ver. 8. *and these three, εἰς τὸ εἶν ἓν, are appointed unto one*. Thing, or Purpose, are so far from being different in Sense, that the latter manifestly explains the former.

Thus the Sense of this Place is settled by solid Proof of Scripture compared with Scripture. This, Reader, I have given as a single Specimen of that just Regard we bear to Revelation, not only in this, but in all other religious Controversies.

And now let the cool and impartial judge, how justly Mr. *Sloss* hath loaded us with the opprobrious Names of *Arians, Heretics, Infidels, Deists, Agents and Instruments of Satan*, p. 6. l. 6. *a considerable Limb of Antichrist*, p. 1. l. 5. *perverse Men*, p. 12. l. 6. *Men of hardened Consciences*; p. 13. l. 7. *blinded by the God of this World*, p. 13. l. 13. *A mean, contemptible Arian Party, a sorry, despicable Faction of Infidels*, p. 17. l. 13. *Abettors of Infidelity*, l. 20. *Adversaries of Truth*, p. 18. l. 35. *Blind Guides*, p. 19. l. 13. Fellow-Christians, we appeal to you. Hath this Gentleman any Reason to charge us with

making the boldest Innovations upon Scripture-doctrine, p. 2. l. 23. setting up human Reason to determine Faith, and decide Controversies, l. 36. inventing whimsical and unscriptural Schemes, p. 3. l. 4? Is there any Argument in these kind and generous Reflections? What Proof hath he brought of this high Charge?

Reader, seriously review this one single Instance, out of many that might be given, of our steady Attachment to Scripture. See how diligently we search, how carefully we examine, how exactly we compare, how naturally we deduce the Sense of every Text, how willingly we bow to the Authority of our LORD Jesus Christ, and say, Is this the way for a Deluge of Error to break in? p. 6. l. 19. or is it not the only way to discover and establish the Truth? Is this departing from the Faith? p. 7. l. 5. Rather, is it not contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints? In this Way can we maintain Errors subversive of Christianity, or inconsistent with saving Faith? p. 7. l. 16. Is this to introduce Licentiousness, and Principles so extravagantly latitudinarian into Christian Societies, as to destroy the very Grounds upon which they are erected? l. 23. What, to form our Judgment precisely upon God's Word! Is this the Method to take away all Marks of Distinction between Christian and other religious Societies, whether Heathen, Jewish or Mahometan? What, to adhere to the plain and simple Truth of the Gospel? What, to submit our Understandings and Consciences to the express Words and Declarations of the LORD Jesus Christ? Is this asserting a Liberty independent of the Divine Will and Law, casting off the Yoke of Heaven, renouncing Allegiance to the King of Sion? p. 8. l. 4. &c. Impugning the most fundamental Articles of our holy Religion? l. 20. Is this a deplorable Defection? l. 25. a woful Backsliding from our Reformation, and preparing a Re-

turn

turn to Antichrist? l. 32. What, to study and search the Scriptures fairly and impartially; will he reckon this among the *unfruitful Works of Darkness?* p. 11. l. 35. Is this the *Spirit of Error and Delusion that is in fact stirring amongst us?* p. 17. l. 9. Would to God it might stir and prevail more and more! I am sure every sincere Christian must join his hearty Wishes, that the Gospel of our Salvation may still be more highly revered, more accurately read, and more perfectly understood.

What the Scriptures reveal concerning the Son of God, we acknowledge and believe. We own him in all his Offices, of Prophet, Priest and King; as the one Mediator between God and Man, our Advocate and Intercessor, the Surety of the better Covenant, the Captain and Author of our Salvation, the only Name given under Heaven among Men, by which we can be saved, and who can save to the uttermost. We are assured of his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, Ascension to Heaven, where he is at the Right-hand of God, *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour*, and from whence he will come at the great Day to judge both the Living and the Dead. We believe all that he hath himself reported, whether by his own Mouth, or the Mouth of his holy Apostles, concerning his Person, Nature and Perfections, his Offices and Works. We take him just as he is described in Revelation; we change nothing of the Gospel; designedly and knowingly we add nothing, we diminish nothing, but leave every thing to stand just as it is in the Word of God. With what Justice then can he suggest, that we are *Blasphemers*, p. 5. l. 32. that *throw Contempt on the Redeemer*, p. 12. l. 6. *professed Deniers of Christ*, l. 20. *Men fighting against, and opposing the Gospel of Christ*, p. 14. l. 7. that *believe in Mahomet as much as Christ*, p. 17. l. 32. that *bring in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that brought them*, p. 11.

1. 9. that *list themselves under a false Christ*, p. 19.
 1. 11. That our Principles are *directly opposed to the Kingdom of Christ*, and *strike so much at the Foundation of his Throne*, that they may be justly called the *Head and Heart of the Man of Sin*, p. 9. l. 7. the *Corruption and infectious Breath of the Son of Perdition*, l. 16. Mr. Slofs can write, and he can write thus. These are his Arguments, this his Method of confuting! Quite indeed unanswerable in kind. For what Man of Sense and Modesty can retaliate? At this rate he may write on to his Life's end; for in the greatest Penury of Evidence, he can never fail of such noble Materials.

And when Scripture fairly explained so evidently destroys Mr. Slofs's Cause, which he builds principally upon the Text I have been examining, what ground hath he to brag so much of his *Orthodoxy*, p. 6. l. 17. and of being *inspired with a just Zeal for the Glory of God the Redeemer*, and *fighting for the Preservation of his Crown*, and the *Dignity of his Person*? p. 9. And why that vain-glorious Boast of his having made such a *Stand in Defence of the Truth*, that the *Adversaries of the Gospel* (as he charitably calls us) are *silenced in Point of Argument*, and *driven quite out of the Field of Truth*, p. 44. l. 38. p. 45. l. 1. Thus he bravely decreeth himself a Triumph, and wreatheth the Laurel about his own Temples for a Victory, I am persuaded he will never be able to win. Thus much for our Regards to Revelation.

But we teach People, it is *their Duty to believe nothing but what they can comprehend*, p. 3. l. 30. And again, p. 12. l. 27. *Do they think to take Sanctuary in that vain Pretence*, That it is above their Understanding to comprehend, how the one Supreme, undivided Essence of the Deity, can subsist in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in such a various Manner, as to constitute them distinct Persons? Will
 their

their not being able to comprehend the Manner of it, how it is, be a sufficient Excuse for their not believing the Truth and Fact of it, that it is, since this is so plainly revealed? To this I answer; that the UNDIVIDED Essence of the Deity subsists in this VARIOUS Manner, is no where revealed in Scripture; and therefore whether we can, or cannot comprehend it, is *no Part of Christian Faith*. But a Word or two about believing Propositions and Facts, which are *incomprehensible*.

I LAY it down for a Truth, *That no Man can believe either a Proposition, or a Fact, which is wholly and entirely above his Understanding to comprehend*. For of that which is entirely above our Understanding to comprehend, we have no Idea; and that of which we have no Idea, is no Object of Thought, and consequently cannot be the Subject of Faith, or of any other Act of our Minds. It is impossible a Man should believe that which to him hath no *Sense or Meaning*. I am apt to think it is above the Understanding of Mr. Slo's to comprehend the Sense of those Words, *Gunebel balsamen erasan*. Now should it be revealed to him from Heaven, that they do contain a true Proposition, Mr. Slo's would rightly think himself obliged to believe they did, although he were ignorant of their Sense. But what would he in this Case believe? A Proposition above his Understanding to comprehend? By no means. He would believe only the Veracity of the Person, who assured him the Proposition is true; but the Proposition itself, or the supposed Truth and Fact therein contained, he believeth not, because he knows not what it is. And if he knew as little of the Veracity of the Person revealing, as he doth of the Proposition itself, he could not possibly believe either the one or the other. Now, though the Words of Mr. Slo's Proposition, relating to the Trinity, are taken out of common Language;

guage; yet the *Fact* or *Truth* they are supposed to signify and express, is as much above his Understanding to comprehend, as the Sense of the Sentence I have quoted out of *Plautus*. And therefore, allowing Mr. *Slofs* to believe it to be a true Proposition, he only believeth God hath revealed it, and that there is some Truth or other in it; but what that Truth is, he doth not know; he hath no Notion or Idea of it; he cannot explain it; he cannot make another Man understand what he means by it. And therefore, if he doth believe the supposed *Truth* or *Fact* of the Proposition, he must believe he knows not what. — No doubt, it is highly reasonable I should believe a *Fact*, which God affirms to be true, although it be above my Understanding to comprehend the *Manner how it is*. For that, with respect to *Existence*, we understand in no Case at all; no, not in our own Existence. Thus I verily believe, upon the Truth and Faithfulness of God, that all those who are dead in their Graves, will be raised and brought to Life again. Which *Fact* I do clearly understand; but the *Manner*, how it will be performed by the Power of God, is quite above my Understanding to comprehend, and therefore I cannot believe in what *Manner*, or by what Kind of Operation it will be effected; only I believe it will be effected in some Way or other to me inconceivable. And if the *Fact*, that the Dead will rise again, were as much above my Understanding as the *Manner* how they will be raised, I could no more believe the Resurrection of the Dead, than I do believe the particular Manner of effecting it; that is to say, I should have no Idea of it; to me it would be quite unintelligible; it would have no Sense or Meaning; and that *Fact* which is unintelligible, without Sense or Meaning, is as little the Object of Faith, as the *Manner, how it is*. Now this is the Case of Mr. *Slofs's Fact*. It is not only the

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the *Manner* of it, *how* it is, that is not the Object of Faith; but the *Fact* itself, *that* it is, is as much above our Understanding to comprehend as the *Manner* of it, and therefore as much above our Belief. *That the ONE SUPREME UNDIVIDED Essence of the Deity subsists in such a VARIOUS Manner as to Constitute THREE DISTINCT PERSONS*, or intelligent Agents; *i. e.* that the Essence of the Deity is UNDIVIDED, and yet at the same time DIVIDED into three *distinct* Persons; that it is absolutely *Simple*, and yet some way or other *Compounded*; that it is by Necessity of Existence but ONE; and yet, as subsisting in three *distinct* Persons, it is MORE THAN ONE; that it hath but *one Manner* of Existence, and yet admits of *various Manners* of Existence; that two other Persons are *equal* to him, who is *Supreme*, or ABOVE ALL. This, as I take

it,

This Distinction of Persons in the Godhead, or Divine Essence, is also attended with other very great Absurdities, as explained by Divines. For they are constrained to allow and maintain that every Person is distinguished from the other two by his own peculiar Property; otherwise they would not be distinct or different Persons, but one and the same Person. Accordingly they tell us, *That every Person in the Divine Nature or Essence, is an intelligent Substance, subsisting by itself, and really distinguished from the other two, by its own incommunicable Property.* And if so, then it follows, that every Person in the Godhead, or Divine Essence, has some Property which the other two have not. For Instance; the incommunicable and distinguishing Property of the Father is *Ayemata*, or his being *unbegotten*; which Property belongs neither to the Son, nor the Spirit, but to the Father alone; and being incommunicable can belong to none but him. The incommunicable and distinguishing Property of the Son is *Tawmaw*, or being *begotten*; which Property belongs neither to the Father, nor the Spirit, but to the Son alone; and being incommunicable, can belong to none but him. The incommunicable and distinguishing Property of the Spirit is *Exropaw*, or his *proceeding* from the Father and the Son; which Property belongs neither to the Father nor the Son, but to the Spirit alone; and being incommunicable, can belong to none but him. Now, seeing every one of those Persons is supposed to be, or sub-

it, is Mr. *Sloss's* Fact. And it is not only the *Manner* of it, but the *Fact* itself, which is above our Understanding to comprehend. It is the *Fact itself* of which we have no Idea, which hath no Sense or Meaning; which is no more the Object of Thought than a Sentence delivered in an unknown Tongue, and consequently no more the Object of Faith. Here Mr. *Sloss* mistaketh the Case; he rightly supposes a *Fact* ought to be believed upon the Divine Testimony alone, though we cannot comprehend the *Manner how it is*; and then fallaciously argueth, we are obliged to do so, in the Case of his Doctrine of the *Trinity*. But in his Doctrine of the *Trinity*,

to sustain the said Fact, it is necessary that the three Persons should subsist in the Divine Essence, it follows, that every one of these Properties, which belongs to these Persons, must also be in the Divine Essence. And certainly every Property in the Divine Nature or Essence, must be a Perfection. For in a Nature infinitely perfect, no Property can possibly be a Defect or Imperfection. Whence it follows, that every one of the Persons supposed to subsist in the Godhead, or Divine Essence, must have at least one Perfection, which the other two want; and must want at least two Perfections which the others have. Consequently, no one of the Persons, upon this Scheme can be absolutely perfect, (because every one wants at least two Perfections,) and so, no one of the three Persons can be the one true God, or the necessarily *all-perfect* Being. If it be said, That all the three Persons together, make the one true God, then it is evident, that the Essence of the one true God is compounded of *Perfections* and *Defects*; seeing every Person in the Divine Essence wants two Perfections, which the others have, or hath one Perfection which the others want. But this is absurd, and inconsistent with the *all-perfect* Nature of God. — Nay, further, it will follow, that the Essence of the one true God, must admit of contradictory and opposite Properties or Perfections. For one Person in the Godhead, or Divine Essence, will be endowed with the Property of being *Unbegotten*, and another Person with the contrary and opposite Property of being *begotten*. One Person will *proceed*, and the other two will *not proceed*. So that it will at the same time be true of the Divine Essence that it is *begotten* and *not begotten*, that it *proceeds* and *doth not proceed*, which is absurd, and altogether inconsistent with the *all-perfect* Nature of God.

Thus this Scheme terminates in Atheism, or the denying of the one only Lord God, Jude 4.

the *Fact* itself is as much above our Understanding to comprehend, as the *Manner* of it; and therefore neither *Fact* nor *Manner* are the Objects of Faith.

But this is not all. We not only cannot comprehend the supposed *Fact* contained in his Proposition relating to the Trinity; it is not only *simply* unintelligible, but further we do clearly understand and comprehend, that it is *positively* and *absolutely* unintelligible; that it is a Contradiction, which neither is, nor *possibly* can be true, and consequently, cannot *possibly* be comprehended by any Understanding whatsoever. It is of the same kind with this Proposition, THAT A THING IS WHAT IT IS NOT. And they who believe his Proposition, do believe it with the same sort of Faith as those *Christians* who believe *Transubstantiation*; or that the one *undivided* Body of Christ may subsist in a Thousand *various* Forms and Places at the same Instant of Time.

For this Error, great as it is, Mr. *Slofs* may plead Authority, Education, Prepossession, &c. And the Plea entitles him to Charity, and favourable Allowance. But I fear he can lay but little Claim to Candour for what follows. In the Beginning of my *Prefatory Discourse*, I give a brief, but honest and impartial history, of the progressive Corruption of Religion, till it was formed into the Kingdom, and most cruel Tyranny of *Antichrist*. I was sensible this would touch those who are not willing we should examine how far Reformation hath advanced among us, and whether we really have retrieved Christianity from every Part of that deplorable Depravation, which had perverted almost the whole. Mr. *Slofs* feels the Force of my tacit Argument. And what doth he do? Deny the Truth of any Part of my Account? That he could not do; the Facts are so well known, and so generally admitted among *Protestants*, that with all his Fire and Courage he hath

hath not ventured to deny one Fact. But what doth he do? Why, by a mean, insidious Trick, he takes my Account, and the very Expressions I used, and turns both upon those he unjustly calls *Arians*. But how awkwardly, how falsely, how ridiculously! I say, a new kind of *Learning* was invented, consisting of *abstract Notions*. He turns it; *A new kind of Light was invented, consisting of contradictory Notions*. — A very odd sort of Light! As he describes it, it is perfect Darknes. — I say, *Mystery* was made a convenient Name and Cover for Absurdity; He, *Reason was made a convenient Name and Cover for Absurdity*. — The unfittest Cover Mr. *Slofs* could have invented. What, *Reason* a Cover for *Absurdity*? — I say, commanding an implicit Belief of whatever the *Church* pronounced to be Faith. He, *commanding an implicit Belief of what she, Reason, pronounced to be Truth*. — A fine Definition of *implicit Faith*! It is believing blindfold with your Eyes wide open. I say, *Human Tradition* and Authority were substituted in the Room of Scripture; He, *Reason was substituted, &c.* I say, a *pretended infallible Judge* was set up to determine Faith; He, *Reason was set up, &c.* I say, the *Papal Authority* exerted itself; He, *Reason, exalted above its due Pitch, exerted itself*. Thank you, Sir; we readily accept REASON in exchange for *Human Tradition*, and *Papal Authority*. But pray tell us, when, and how *Reason* can be exalted above its due Pitch. I see how human Reason may be debased, by being misapplied and abused. But can there be an Excess in the Exercise of Reason? Or any Cases offered to our Minds, in Nature or Revelation, wherein Reason ought not to be employed?

But these are small things; his manifest Design is to make the Simple and Unwary believe, that the grand Corruption of Religion, which hath prevailed
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for more than a Thousand Years (p. 2. l. 6.) was begun, perfected, and supported by *Arians*; whereas it is known to all Mankind, that the *Orthodox*, or *Catholicks*, as they called themselves, quite overpowered the *Arians*, and went on, as they had begun, with a high Hand to finish the Corruption of Religion, and to set up the Man of Sin, the *Romish Hierarchy*. The *Orthodox* begun, and the *Orthodox* finished the Corruption of Religion. The Church of *Rome* is the grand Apostasy foretold in the *Revelation*, which hath prevailed, and perverted the Gospel for more than a Thousand Years; and it is notorious, that the Church of *Rome*, during that Space of Time, always was, and still is, to this Day, in the *Athanasian orthodox Scheme*; the very Scheme which Mr. *Slofs* with so much Zeal espouseth (though I think he has, at least in his Manner of Expression, carried it still further from the Truth.) Can Mr. *Slofs* be ignorant, either that Popery is the grand Corruption of Religion, or that *Papists* ever were no other than *Orthodox*? All the World knows the pretended *Orthodox* did lay the Scriptures aside, and substitute human Traditions, and an infallible Judge in their Room; but with what Front can Mr. *Slofs* say the *Arians* did so? p. 2. l. 34. How can he insinuate, that the Men of *Learning and Distinction* in the corrupt Church, were *Arians*; when, from those very Men of Learning, he himself deriveth, and holds perhaps the greatest Part of his Divinity? How can he so boldly affirm, that by the Men of Learning amongst the *Arians*, a thousand idle Books were written? Four or Five Scraps of Books, written by the *Arians* are now extant, viz. the Fragments of *Philostorgius*, *Eunomius*, *Aetius*, *Asterius*, and the Author of the imperfect Work upon *Matthew*. But, besides these, I question whether Mr. *Slofs* can name five *Arian* Authors, that wrote during the long Space
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of 1200 Years, from 312, when *Arius* distinguished himself, to the Year 1500. about which Time the *Reformation* began. And if he could make out Ten *Arian* Books, his Friends must be very good, if they throw in the odd 990, (a trifling Sum) to secure him from the Charge of MAKING HISTORY, and to reconcile his Assertion with Truth. But the World hath long groaned under Loads of idle Books, the Produce of the *Orthodox* Schools. The pretended *Orthodox* were the Authors of the *Inquisition*, and have employed that cruel Engine of spiritual Tyranny in Support of their Principles, for near Five Hundred Years. But Mr. *Slofs* cannot but know there never was such a Thing as an *Arian Inquisition*, p. 4. l. 14. He cannot but know that our first Reformers did not reform from *Arianism*, or *Arian Popery*; but from the Church of *Rome*, which was as violent an Enemy to *Arians* as the Reformers themselves, and indeed had quite oppressed and sunk them into Obscurity, if any there were, many Ages before the *Reformation*. He cannot but know, that the *First Reformers*, whatever other Part of *Popery* they corrected, made not the least Amendment upon the Article of the *Trinity*; but brought it with them out of *Popery* in the Rough, just as it was taught and established in the Church of *Rome*; and so it hath stood in *Protestant* Confessions from that Day to this, enforced by the Authority of human Laws, and the severest Penalties. Thus he hath not only betrayed himself into the greatest Inconsistencies, but also into the most notorious Falsification of History, by fraudulently endeavouring to rob me of my Argument, and the Force of my just and upright Language. I own I am not displeased that my Shoe fits his Foot no better; and am inclined to wish him the same Success, if ever he attempts to adapt my Language to his *present* Principles; for, to be plain, I do not
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like any thing of mine should be employed in the Service of so bad a Cause.

Though we have no Accounts of the *Arians* but from professed Enemies, yet, having been first grievously persecuted by the *Orthodox*, who opened the bloody Scene in the Days of *Constantine*, they might retaliate when they had Power. But Mr. *Sloss* cannot from hence fix the Charge of Persecution upon us; who not only professedly disavow it, but do every where live in peaceable Communion with all our Fellow-Christians. And it is not in his Power to produce any Instance since the Reformation, where those he invidiously calls *Arians*, have given any Disturbance to Christian Assemblies, but what they have weakly, and unnecessarily given themselves. We judge all Parties of Christians have too long abused and worried one another, and that it is high time to study Love, Peace, and Unity; and are sorry Mr. *Sloss* and his Party are not disposed to come into these Sentiments, so perfectly agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel. However, it giveth us some Comfort, that where-ever the Truth lieth in this Controversy, the World may see *Persecution* and *Uncharitableness* are wholly on Mr. *Sloss's* Side of the Question. He hath actually excommunicated a Christian Brother for only Difference of Sentiment. He never heard that those he falsely calls *Arians*, either excluded, or withdrew from their Fellow-Christians upon that Account. The Principles of *Persecution* he is now actually and publicly defending; and I am now actually and publicly opposing them, and endeavouring to establish those of *Unity* and *Concord*, Charity, and Brotherly-kindness.

But he shelters himself under the Creeds and Confessions of the First Reformers; p. 4. l. 31. *Our First Reformers — translated the Scriptures — and asserted them to be the only Rule of Faith and Doctrine. — They gave clear Explications of them in*

Commentaries, Systems of Divinity, &c. Thus the Minds of Protestant Countries were universally irradiated with Divine Light, and very soon the Glory and Beauty of the Churches of Christ began to shine in the Unity of their Faith, and Harmony of their Creeds and Confessions. — By an inverted Gradation Mr. Stoss ascends from the Scriptures to Creeds and Confessions, and there fixeth his Argument, and the Glory and Beauty of the Churches of Christ. But what are Creeds and Confessions? — They are like unto Artificial Glasses, whereby the scattered Rays of Divine Revelation are collected, that the Light thereof may strike the weak Eyes of the dark Minds of private Christians with a more forcible Illumination, p. 5. l. 12. I mislike not this Description. His Creeds, and his Confessions, are fitly compared to Glasses, made by the Art and Device of Man. But our Reformers were not the first Contrivers of these artificial Glasses. The first Pair of Spectacles of this kind was made in the Nicene Council, Anno 325, by a Faction of proud, contentious Bishops, who had got Possession of the Emperor's Ear, and who condemned and excommunicated all that were unwilling their Sight should be directed by them. The ambitious Priests, finding the Device of singular Use to support their Usurpations, continued the Trade of making or altering these Glasses, as best suited their tyrannical Views; and always enforced the Use of them by heavy Anathemas, and severe temporal Penalties. In this Way they were brought to a surprizing Degree of Perfection, about the Times of the Reformation. You had Glasses then, (and some Christians are fond of them still) in which you might plainly discern the VIRGIN MARY's Equality to GOD in Power and Glory; the Pope's Authority, as the Supreme Head of the Church upon Earth; a religious Veneration belonging to Pieces of Wood, Nails, Rags, Bones, &c. Our Reformers
judging

judging those *Glasses* enormous, broke them in pieces. But having always been used to this Way of Sight, thought something of the same Nature necessary to the Preservation of true Faith. Accordingly to work they went; prepared the best *Glasses* they could, and imposed them upon the Eyes of all within their Power. This is a brief History of these Ecclesiastical Spectacles, which for many Hundreds of Years have illuded the Sight of the Christian World. The Nature and Use of them we learn from Mr. *Slofs*'s Account before us. There are two Ways of Illumination among Christians. The one of Divine Institution, whereby with open Face and naked Eye we behold the Glory of the Lord in his Word. The other of Human Invention, by the Interposition of these *Artificial Glasses*. In order to the proper Use of which, Mr. *Slofs* intimateth some Things are previously to be admitted — As, I. That the *Rays of divine Revelation are scattered*, i. e. faint and feeble, which give but a dim, imperfect Sight of Objects, as they lie in Scripture, p. 5. l. 13. and, consequently, that they want the Aid of those *Glasses* to collect them into a Light sufficient for Illumination. II. That *private Christians*, i. e. all Christians, excepting the learned Priesthood, have *weak Eyes*, and *dark Minds*, l. 17. are very defective in their Intellectuals, and void of Faculties sufficient to discern the Truths of Revelation. A firm Persuasion of this Article, as well as the former, is absolutely necessary to convince you of the Importance of the *Glasses*, and to bring you to a humble Submission of your Consciences to the Priests, in the Use of them. III. You must stedfastly believe upon Mr. *Slofs*'s honest Word, that these Glasses do *bold forth the genuine Sense of Scripture*, l. 25, 35. p. 6. l. 18. and therefore that Things, Persons and Facts, are in Truth just as the Glasses represent them, and no otherwise. If you cordially admit these three

Points, you are thoroughly prepared for the Use of the Glasses; which according to Mr. *Slofs* is four-fold. 1. To strike your *weak Eyes, and dark Minds, with a more forcible Illumination*. Thus, with open Face, you read, *God created all things by Jesus Christ*, Eph. iii. 9. Apply your Glasses, and it stands in a different View; thus, *Besides Jesus Christ there is no other Supreme God, no, not that God who created all things by him*, p. 13. l. 30. See many Texts thus forcibly illuminated, in Mr. *Slofs's* Sermons. Another Use, 2. is to *direct the just Exercise of Christian Charity*, p. 5. l. 19. With naked Eye we read in Scripture, that Love and Good-will to all Men, even to Enemies, is essential to Christian Charity. Put on Mr. *Slofs's* Spectacles, and you will see, that *Love to all Mankind is a mere beathemish Humanity*, l. 23. In the Scriptures we plainly see we should not judge, or set at nought our Brother, being all Members of the Body of *Christ*.—Apply his Glasses. —Now what do you see? A *Bastard-Charity*, p. 19. l. 8. a *pitiful Tool*, p. 9. l. 27. an *Heretic, a scandalous, notorious Offender*, p. 10. l. 7. a *rotten Member*, p. 41. Excommunicate him. 3. Another Use is to *guard against the pernicious Errors of the Age, &c.* p. 5. l. 27. In most Ages of the corrupt State of the Church, God hath raised up his Witnesses, Men of Knowledge and Integrity, to protest against the growing or continued Depravations of Religion.—Apply these Glasses. —What are they now? —PESTILENT *ARIANS*, ROTTEN *ARMINIANS*, &c. Thus you are happily guarded against all the Evidence they offer. 4. The last Use is to enable Christians to *make an open Profession of the Doctrines of the Gospel*, as not being ashamed of them, l. 32. For being fully persuaded all is Gospel you see through these Glasses; that Fathers and antient Doctors approve, and most Christians use them; this giveth the utmost Assurance in professing the most

most shameful Absurdities; and, instead of being covered with Confusion, you are inspired with the most intemperate Zeal in their Defence. For, by the way, these Instruments, partaking of the Nature of Burning-Glasses, are very apt to inflame the Passions, as well as deceive the Sight. I shall only add, that as People are carefully taught to wear them from their earliest Youth, they are with difficulty persuaded to lay them aside, as not knowing how to see without them. Hence it is, that most Christians, whatever they pretend, make little or no Use of any other Means of Sight, beside these *Artificial Glasses*.

But how much soever the Christian World valueth these *Artificial Glasses*, these Creeds and Confessions, I confess, for my own Part, I have no Opinion of them; and the Name, *Protestant*, is so far from sanctifying, that it sinks them still lower in my Esteem. But Mr. *Sloss* tells us, they were generally (he could not say, *always*) drawn up by the *ablest Divines*, p. 5. l. 9. But how doth he know they were generally the *ablest Divines*? Are Divines in Vogue and Power commonly the most knowing and upright? But granting they were in those Times the *ablest Divines*; the *ablest Divines* educated in Popish Schools, notwithstanding any *pretended Learning*, might comparatively be very weak and defective in Scripture-knowledge, which was a thing in a Manner new to them. As the strongest of Ten weak, sickly Persons, may be very feeble, in comparison of those who are in full Vigour of Health. In Times of great Ignorance, they might be Men of Eminence, and yet far short of being qualified to draw up, and decide the true and precise Rules of Faith for all Christians. Yea, their very attempting to draw up, decide, and establish such Rules of Faith, is an incontestible Evidence of their surprizing Ignorance and Weakness. How could they

they be able Divines, when they imposed upon the Consciences of Christians their *own Decisions*, concerning Gospel-Faith and Doctrine? Was not this in fact to teach and constrain Christians to depart from the most fundamental Principle of their Religion, *Subjection and Allegiance to CHRIST, the only Teacher and Lawgiver*? But if they were *Able Men*, were they *Infallible*? No; they publicly affirmed their own *Pallability*. And if they had not, the demonstrable Errors of their *Confessions* would have proved it. And if they were not *infallible*, they might be mistaken; and, if so, all that Mr. *Slojs* saith, concerning their *holding forth the Light of Scripture*, and *guarding against Error*, cometh to nothing. They were but *fallible Men*, that might be mistaken; and yet they acted as if they were *infallible*, and could not be mistaken in prescribing Faith and Doctrine. So little Care, or so little Understanding had they to guard against a most glaring Inconsistency! But if they were *infallible*, who gave them a Commission to do what the Spirit of God had already done? Could the First Reformers hope to deliver the Truths of Religion more fully and more clearly than the Spirit of God? Had they found out more apt Expressions than occurred to the Spirit of God? The Son of God *spake not of himself*; — but as the Father said unto him, so he spake, John xii. 50. The Spirit of Truth *spake not of himself*; but whatsoever he heard, that he spake, John xvi. 13. The Things of God the Apostles *spake, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. And if the Christian Revelation was handed down to us from the Fountain of Light with so much Care and Exactness, both as to Matter and Words, by the Son of God, by the Spirit, and by the Apostles, who were the antient Doctors and Bishops? Or who were the First Reformers? Or who were any Synods or Assemblies

semblies of Divines, that they DARED to model Christian Faith into their own invented Forms, and impose it upon the Minds of Men, in their own devised Terms and Expressions? Hath *Christ* given Authority to all his Ministers, to the End of the World, to new-mould his Doctrines by the Rules of *Human Learning*, whenever they think fit? Or hath he delegated his Power to any particular Persons? Neither the one, nor the other. His Doctrines are not of such a ductile Nature, but stand fixed, both as to *Matter* and *Words*, in the Scripture. And it is at any Man's PERIL, who pretends to put them, *as they are Rules of Faith*, into any new Dress or Shape. I conclude therefore, that the First Reformers, and all Councils, Synods and Assemblies, who have met together to collect, determine, and decide, to prescribe and impose Matters pertaining to Christian Faith, have acted without any Warrant from CHRIST, and therefore have invaded the Prerogative of him, who is the sole *Prophet* and *Lawgiver* to the Church. Peace and Unity, I know, is the pretended good Design of those Creeds and Confessions. But as God never sanctified them for those Ends, so all the World knows they have produced the contrary Effects. Discord, Division, and the spilling whole Seas of Christian Blood, for 1400 Years together.

But *they hold forth the genuine Sense of Scripture*, p. 5. l. 35. How comes Mr. *Sloss* to know that? Speaks he at random, or hath he examined the Truth of those Confessions? And will he allow us also to examine? Or must we believe him and them blind-fold? He cannot insist upon that. It is our Privilege and Duty to examine. And by what Rule? I take upon me to answer, by the Scriptures; for we have no other Rule of judging whether their Sense be agreeable to Scripture. And if we must judge from Scripture, whether Creeds

and Confessions do hold forth the genuine Sense of Scripture, then the genuine Sense of Scripture may be known from itself, and so there is no need of Creeds and Confessions to ascertain it; but, if they can serve no better Purpose, may very well be laid aside as useless.

This brings to mind his Note, p. 50. There he chargeth me with drawing a false consequence from his Answer to Mr. Rawson's Question; and then, after two long confused Sentences, giveth the Result of them in these Words. *Now any one with half an Eye may see, that this is not to make the Words of Creeds and Confessions a Rule, by which the Sense of Scripture-words is to be judged; it is only to make them a Mean to help to judge Persons, whether they take the Scripture-words in their true Sense or not* — Very good indeed! Pray, where is the Difference between judging of the Sense of Scripture-words, and judging whether Persons take the Scripture-words in their true Sense? If Creeds and Confessions are not a Rule by which the Sense of Scripture-words is to be judged, how can they be a Mean to judge Persons, whether they take Scripture-words in their true Sense? And if they are a Mean, or Rule, to judge whether Persons take Scripture-words in their true Sense; then surely they are a Mean or Rule by which the Sense of Scripture-words is to be tried, or judged. For that is the very thing to be tried or judged, namely, whether Scripture-words are taken in their true Sense. So that after all, the Affair rests just where it was, and Mr. Slofs hath taken a great deal of Pains to shew my Deductions are good, viz. If Creeds and Confessions are more sufficient than Scripture-words to judge whether Mens Sentiments are according to Scripture, then Creeds, &c. are a necessary Rule by which the Sense of Scripture-words is to be tried and judged; and then Scripture-words are not sufficient to ascertain their own Sense; and then Scripture-words have no certain Sense without Creeds,

Creeds, &c. And then *they are a Rule, only so far as they are regulated by another Rule. And then the Scriptures are not the only Rule of Faith, nor in themselves any Rule at all. Thus Popish Principles, under what Form soever professed, always turn out in the Ruin of Revelation, and the Advancement of human Wisdom and Authority, above that which is divine.*

But he saith, *Creeds and Confessions are a Mean to help to judge Persons, whether they take the Scripture-words in their true Sense or not; and those who use Creeds and Confessions right, use them for that End.* Mark well; *Creeds, &c. are a Mean to judge Persons.* There is the Comma and Emphasis. To judge PERSONS; that is it; to judge *Heretics*, to perplex and intangle such as dare not carry their Faith beyond express Revelation. Scripture-words will *not* do to detect and judge a *Heretic* of this perverse Kind. No; he will readily assent to the Whole of Revelation. — What then must be done? — Produce human Schemes, Creeds and Confessions, and strenuously insist upon his Assent to them. And if the present received Schemes will not do, never scruple to form new Propositions adapted to the particular Turn the Heresy shall take. Mr. *Slofs* will warrant the Practice good.

This is the true Secret of detecting and judging *Heretics*; a Work Mr. *Slofs* hath very much at Heart, and rejoiceth over his *Creeds and Confessions*, as being particularly adapted to discover the Errors, and detect those lurking Heresies, which are the Bane of Churches, and poison Christian Societies, p. 6. l. 12. — In this I agree with him. I readily acknowledge Creeds and Confessions are admirably well adapted to detect the Heresies he speaks of, and that Scripture-words are not a sufficient Mean for that Purpose. But then I ask Leave to prove, that the Work of detecting *Heretics*, for which Scripture-words are not sufficient, is not a good Work. And I undertake to do it from that Text, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. *All Scripture is given by*

by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God, the Minister of the Gospel, may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works; or, unto every good Work. Now, if the Minister of the Gospel is, by the Instruction of Scripture, thoroughly furnished to every good Work, any Work he undertaketh, for which Scripture is not sufficient, without the Help of human Schemes, &c. can be no good Work. But Mr. *Slois* hath detected, cited, and tried a supposed Heretic; for which Work he confesseth Scripture-words were not sufficient; therefore it was no good Work; and I reckon myself at Liberty to say, it was an evil Work. And further, that Creeds and Confessions are of no Service in detecting Heretics, so far as it is a good Work; seeing the Scripture is compleatly sufficient for every good Work without them. *Satan*, the Arch-Heretic, attempted to pervert our Lord himself, and to that End abused a Scripture Quotation, *He shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee*, &c. *Mat. iv. 6.* And how did the Son of God confute the Sophistry of this Heretic? Not by the Comments and Schemes of Men, which are no ways essential to the Rule of Faith; but by comparing one Part of Scripture with another, the only right Method of understanding any Writings, *ver. 7.* *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,* i. e. though God hath promised to protect good Men, yet we are not to insist or expect he should work Miracles for our Preservation, whenever we in Wantonness or Unbelief demand them. Compare *Deut. vi. 16.* with *Exod. xvii. 2.* Which Scripture-proof evidently detecting the Fallacy of the Arch-Heretic, I conclude upon this Example of the great Christian Lawgiver, that Scripture-words alone, without human Schemes are abundantly sufficient to shew, whether the subtlest Heretics take them in their true Sense.

Sense. According to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, *search the Scriptures; what is written? How readest thou?* Is an infallible Guide in Matters of Faith, and the surest Guard against all Error.

This incontestable Evidence of the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures Mr. *Sless* applieth in Support of a fallacious Argument, which in effect destroys the Use and Authority of them, p. 51. At the Bottom of the Note. *The Scriptures, saith he, in themselves have a certain Sense; and when taken in that Sense, are a Rule of Faith; but strip of that Sense, and taken in another Sense, contrary to that affixed to them by the Spirit, the Words of Scripture in that Case, are so far from being the Rule of Faith or right Sentiment, that they are the Dictates of Satan.* This is a great Mistake. The true Sense affixed by the Spirit to the Words of Scripture, doth constitute the Rule of Faith; but not their being TAKEN or understood in that true Sense. For whether we do, or do not take the Scriptures in their true Sense, still they are a Rule of Faith; their being such a Rule depending not upon any Judgment we form of them, but upon their own intrinsic Truth and Evidence. *Satan* used those Words, *He shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee, &c.* in a Sense contrary to that affixed to them by the Spirit. What follows? That those Words, *He shall give his Angels, &c.* are therefore no Rule of Faith, but the Dictates of Satan? God forbid. Not the Words, but the Sense in which *Satan* would have them understood is the Dictate of *Satan*. The Scriptures are still a Rule of Faith, though understood in a wrong Sense; only that wrong Sense is not the Rule of Faith. No, nor the right Sense neither, considered as understood by us. Indeed, the right Direction of my Conscience and Actions depends upon my understanding the Scriptures in a right Sense. But the right Sense of the Rule, as understood by me, is not the Rule itself, nor

nor maketh it to be a Rule. It was a Rule before I understood it; it would have been a Rule had I never understood it; and it is a Rule now that I do understand it; not because I understand it, but because it is a Rule in its own Nature. So my steady ruling the Lines in a Book by a streight Rule, maketh the *Lines* to be streight; but doth not make the Rule to be a *Rule*; for it is a Rule, whether I use it with a steady or shaking Hand. Further; If the Scriptures are a Rule of Faith only so far as they are *taken* in the Sense affixed to them by the Spirit, *then* their being a Rule of Faith evidently depends upon Mens *taking* them in that Sense. And *then*, some Men must *take* them in that Sense, or they are no Rule at all to us. And *then* the Judgment of those Men who take them in that Sense, constituteth the Rule of Faith; and consequently, if there is any Rule of Faith in the World, some Men have a Right to propose their Judgment as constituting the Rule of Faith to all other Men. Thus, Mr. Slofs is once more fairly landed upon the *Popish Coast*; for *this is the very Foundation-stone of Popery and all spiritual Tyranny*. Mr. Slofs tells you his Reasoning, which I am now considering, shews, *The Scriptures being the only Rule of Faith, is consistent enough with the Words of Creeds and Confessions being necessary, in order to know whether Persons take the Words of Scripture in that true Sense affixed to them by the Spirit, &c.* His Reasoning shews more than this. Supposing those Creeds and Confessions give us the true Sense of Scripture, it shews that *they make the Scriptures to be a Rule of Faith*. The very thing which I charge upon his Principles, and which he is here endeavouring to remove.

There is another Argument in the same Note, p. 52. which deserveth our Attention. — *It doth not, saith he, in the least, suppose a Want of Perspicuity in the Scriptures, or their Insufficiency to explain themselves,*

themselves, that Ministers appointed of God for that very Purpose, or others, assist those of weaker Capacities by Works of human Composure, to find out the certain Sense to which the Scripture-words may and ought to be reduced. Therefore it is not diminishing of the Light or Authority of Scripture, to use the Words of Creeds and Confessions of *human Composure*, as Standards and Tests of Christian Faith. This must be Mr. *Sloar's* Argument, if it is any thing to his Purpose.—Now it is granted, any Means of explaining Scripture, and Scripture-Doctrine, are useful and necessary. But is there no Difference between *instructing* the Mind, and *imposing* upon the Conscience? To the best of my Ability I explain the Scripture. Very well. But what would Mr. *Sloar* say, if I should turn my own Explications into Rules of Faith, and Standards whereby to judge of the Soundness of the Faith of all Christians? What if I require all within my Reach, under Pain of Excommunication, or something worse, to assent, subscribe, and swear to my Thoughts and Judgment, as the precise Sense of Scripture, and the true Form of Gospel Doctrine? Here I do more than *explain* the Rule of Faith; I turn my own Explications, what I think and judge, into that Rule; as if the Truth were as certainly and fully contained in my Comments, as in the Scripture itself. Under Pretence of giving the true Sense of Scripture, which is infallible, I arrogate to myself Infallibility, and ascribe to my own Notions the Light and Authority of Scripture. I am no longer an *Expounder*, but a *Maker* of Doctrine. I no longer teach Submission to CHRIST, as Lord and Lawgiver, but step into his Throne, and assume that Honour to myself. It is the Work of Ministers to open the Scriptures as well as they can; to point out the Light shining in them, which otherwise might be overlooked by those whose Hands are commonly filled

filled with temporal Affairs; and the Hearers are to examine and judge, whether what they teach be agreeable to Truth. The Bishops are honoured with a high Character, because they searched the Scriptures daily, whether the things which even the Apostles taught were so, *Acts xvii. 11.* *Not that we have Dominion over your Faith, 1 Cor. i. 24.* *I speak as to wise Men; judge ye what I say, 1 Cor. x. 15.* So the Apostle. — But you shall not judge what I say; you shall take it implicitly upon my Word. The Scriptures you may search; but you shall find no Sense in them but mine. I make it a Crime for any Man to dispute what I affirm, or to be wiser than I am. No, your Understanding shall, after the *Procrustian* Method, be either cut or stretched exactly to the Dimensions of mine. Cannot Mr. *Sless* see how unreasonable and enormous this is? And yet this is the real Case of all Creed and Confession-Makers, from the Council of Nice, in 325, to the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in 1643. I shall confine myself to the Reformers; and choose to fix my Eye upon a memorable Act of the Synod of Alex. in France, 1620, which you have at large in *Quaker's Synodicon Gal. Reform.* Vol. II. p. 37. The Synod of Dord. assembled to decide Matters of Faith in 1618. They subscribed their own Decisions, declaring they *so thought and judged*; then, in order to excommunicate all of different Sentiments, called in the secular Power to establish their *Thoughts and Judgment*; and the secular Power did confirm them by the usual Methods of Banishment, Fines, Imprisonment and Death. In the fore-said Synod of Alex., all the Pastors and Elders deputed thereunto, swore and protested their Consent to the Doctrine of the Synod of Dord., *That they would defend it with the utmost of their Power, even to their last Breath.* And moreover decreed, that the following Oath should be taken and subscribed
by

by all Pastors and Elders in the *French Churches*, and by the Doctors and Professors of their Universities, upon Pain of being excluded out of all Offices and Employments in either. The Form of the Oath, so far as it relateth to the Synod of Dort, is this. — *I N. N. do swear and protest before God, and this holy Assembly, that I do receive, approve and embrace all the Doctrines taught and decided by the Synod of Dort, as perfectly agreeing with the Word of God, and the Confession of our Churches. I swear and promise to persevere in the Profession of this Doctrine during my whole Life; and to defend it with the utmost of my Power; and that I will never, neither by preaching, nor teaching in the Schools, nor by writing, depart from it. — And so may God help me, and be propitious to me, as I swear this without any Ambiguity, Equivocation, and mental Reservation.* Behold, a Decree, which without Doubt was executed, that a whole Nation of Protestant Divines, Professors in Universities, Pastors and Elders in Churches, should be solemnly sworn never in effect to see or know more than the Synod of Dort. But, if they should discover any Truth, which the Synod might possibly overlook or mistake, to resist and suppress it, contrary to any possible future Light of Evidence, and the Convictions of their own Consciences. Behold, one *Protestant Synod* pronouncing with an Air of Infallibility, that another *Protestant Synod* had perfectly and infallibly gathered the Doctrines they taught and decided from the Word of God; though both, as Protestants, openly disclaimed Infallibility; and though every Body knows, that in such Synods and Assemblies, Doctrines and Points of Faith are decided, not by Force of Evidence, but by the Number of Votes, the most uncertain Way of ascertaining the Truth.

And further, it must be the Persuasion of both these Synods, that to preserve the true Faith and Doctrine of Christianity, it was more fit and right to assent,

assent, subscribe, and swear to, the Doctrines taught and decided by the Synod of Dort, than to search and study the Scriptures; although it is an express Article in the *French Confession of Faith**. Article V. *We believe, that the Doctrine contained in these Books [of the Holy Scriptures] proceeded from God. And forasmuch as it is the Rule of all Truth, containing all Matters necessarily required for the Worship of God, and our Salvation, it is in no wise lawful for Men nor Angels to add unto, or take from this Doctrine, or to change it. And hereupon it follows, that it is not lawful to oppose either Antiquity, or Custom, or Multitude, or human Wisdom, Judgments, Edicts, or any Decrees, or Councils, or Visions, or Miracles, unto this Holy Scripture; but rather, that all things ought to be examined and tried by the Rule and Square thereof. And yet, notwithstanding this Declaration, this same Church of France obliged all Ministers to subscribe other Articles of Faith, containing the Thoughts and Judgment of JOHN CALVIN who drew them up. The Tenth Canon of the first Synod at Paris, 1559, runs thus. † If a People, not having the Ministry of the Word of God settled amongst them, should choose unto themselves a Pastor, the neighbouring Church shall amicably and earnestly intreat him to confer with them, and exhort him to subscribe the Confession of Faith, and Church-Discipline, established among us. And in Case of refusing such Subscription, three or four Ministers of the next Churches shall assemble together with their Elders, and shall then declare him a Schismatic, and the People shall be advised to avoid such a Person, i. e. They, who at the same Time openly and strongly professed there was no other Rule of Faith besides the Holy Scriptures, by this Canon directed Ministers and People to do all in their Power to ruin the Man, who refused to subscribe the Thoughts and Judgment of JOHN CALVIN, which he had modelled into a Formulary*

* Quick's Synod, Vol. I. p. 7. † Synod, Vol. I. p. 3.

lity of Faith. But this is the manifest and publick Inconsistency in which all, or the greatest Part of the *Reformed Churches* have persisted to this Day. They all profess the Scriptures to be the only Standard of Faith and Truth; by which all the Decrees, Schemes, and Doctrines of Men are to be tried; and yet all of them require those whom they accept for Ministers to subscribe certain Articles or Confessions framed by fallible Men, and taken, for the most Part, from the said JOHN CALVIN's Scheme, as containing the true Christian Faith; excluding all those Ministers from publick Offices and Emoluments who refuse such Subscription. *Thus*, according to our Protestant Establishments, even in those Churches, which boast of the greatest purity, the Integrity of Ministers in their Youth, and at their Entrance upon the sacred Work, is grievously wounded. The first Step they take, is prostituting their Consciences to the unjust Commands of human Authority, and the sordid Motive of temporal Gain. *Thus*, so far as the greatest Part of Protestant Establishments have prevailed, Ministers have not been allowed freely to search the Scriptures, or to examine the Doctrines which Men and Synods have decided, either before, or after their Entrance upon the Ministry. For, as few People care for that Honesty, which is the Mother of Poverty, so who would like to see any Truth in Scripture, the Profession of which would reduce a Man to a starving Condition? Or to what Purpose should he take a Bible into his Hands, who must find nothing in it but what CALVIN judged to be true, and is sworn to wink hard at all the rest? Any further Light or Truth must appear, not amiable and welcome, but shocking and hateful to a Man in such Circumstances. *Thus* Ministers are, in effect, by the solemnest Ties engaged, and by the strongest Motives of temporal Interest constrained,

to wrest the Word of God, and make it speak the Sense of JOHN CALVIN, or of any other Human Scheme they have sworn and subscribed to believe and maintain. *Thus*, prompted by the Desire of popular Esteem, and the Shame of being publickly cast out of Congregations, Ministers have been afraid of free Enquiry; displeased, if not enraged at any that offered to convince them of an Error. Hence their whole Study was to confirm themselves in the Points they had solemnly embraced. Hence they were ready to catch hold of any Twig to support those Points, and to magnify any thing in the Scriptures, which seemed to favour of them, into a Demonstration. *Thus* Mens Wits have been set upon the Rack to invent *Hypotheses* or Suppositions, to make their Necks as easy in the Collar as possible; and he hath been applauded as the most excellent Genius, that could give an Error the greatest Shew of Probability; and Divinity hath been a Trial of Invention and Subtilty, more than a Knowledge of the Truth. *Thus* Absurdities have multiplied upon us, and the Learned in endeavouring to support one, have created many. *Thus* the whole Body of original Ignorance, which our first Reformers, or rather CALVIN alone, brought out of Popery, hath not only been established, and made the due Boundary of Faith and Knowledge, but enlarged. And had it not been for some excellent Men of uncommon Understanding and Courage, who dared to peep beyond the Pale of the Enclosure, where, like Cattle, we are all impounded, who can tell to what Degrees of Ignorance we had by this Time arrived? *Thus* *Deism* hath increased upon us, through the obstinate Defence of manifest Inconsistencies, as belonging to the Christian Faith. *Thus* Ministers have been brought into Contempt, and they and their People have fallen into a thoughtless, unenquiring State. Instead of *searching the Scriptures*, and tak-
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ing due Pains to draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation, they have acquiesced in the Forms provided to their Hands ; and so Ministers have been learned, fluent Preachers, and People good Christians, upon a small Stock of Scripture-Knowledge. *Thus* we have retained the Name without the Reality of studying the Scriptures. *Thus* the Schemes of the Reformers, under Pretence of being drawn from Scripture, have been substituted in the Place thereof. *Thus* Congregations have in Time, and by the Force of *Custom*, turned that into a Rule, which was at first imposed upon *them* in the Days of their Ignorance ; and at length are brought to think, it is their Duty to condemn and eject those as Unsound, who have Sense and Courage enough to disclaim commonly received Errors.

And from all this we may judge, how Errors were introduced, and how they have been retained and defended. They were introduced by a Defect of Knowledge in the first Reformers, and have been supported by Custom, and the Tyranny of human Power. *Lastly, Thus* Mr. *Slofs* may clearly see the Difference between a Man's preaching, or writing for the Instruction of others, and his forming his Sentiments into Rules of Faith, and imposing them upon the Consciences of those who are obnoxious to him.

It is no Pleasure to me to dwell upon the Faults or Defects of our Reformers. I am ready to give them all the Praise and Honour due to Men who made a brave Stand upon the Usurpation of the Church of *Rome*. But it is impossible we should correct the Disorders and Clogs upon Religion, which have descended down from them, without exposing and censuring their Mistakes ; which yet are open to all the World, and have been a strong Bar in the Way of Reformation, and the Increase of true Light. But which Way shall you look with

any Hopes of a Remedy? **DISSENTERS**, you have taken the most solid and justifiable Steps towards the Cure of our Distempers. *You may reform what is yet amiss.* And consider, if it is not the Part assigned to you, whom a kind Providence hath in a great Measure freed from the Slavery of human Impositions, to perfect this good Work? Is not this the best Way of supporting your Interest, which stands neither in Numbers, Power, Wealth or Policy, but deriveth its Dignity and Strength only from the **TRUTH** known, professed and practised? Doth not God justly expect Reformation from you for the Favours he hath conferred for many Years past? Will it not be your Glory and Honour to the End of the World?

“But what would you have us do?” — Think not you are so pure as to need no further Washing, or that you are got perfectly clear of *Romish* Principles, because you have renounced external Communion with the Church of *Rome*. Not only *profess*, but in *Fact* make the Scriptures the only Rule of Christian Knowledge and Practice. Use them every Man for the Enlightening and Direction of his own Mind, and not for judging and imposing upon his Christian Brother. Let Charity be the Soul of your Profession. Hate, and put away from you all Wickedness, and then think of censuring and condemning erroneous Judgments, when you are sure you are free from Error yourselves. Cast out of your Academies Systems of Divinity composed upon the whimsical Learning of the *Popish* Schools. There is more Truth in one Paragraph of the Apostolic Writings, than in whole Cart-Loads of such Lumber, which serveth only to confound the Understanding, and clog the Conscience. Let the *New Testament* be the Plan of educating Youth for the Ministry. Let them learn to understand those divine Writings, and fetch Doctrine and Faith truly and impartially from

from thence. *Throw off your Prejudices and Prepossessions; have your Minds open to the Truth. Insist upon it that your Ministers reject human Schemes; that they study impartially, and profess and preach freely, what they find in the Word of God. And do you herein join Issue with them, and on your Part diligently read, and carefully endeavour to gain the genuine Sense of Scripture.—*

“ But will not such Liberties introduce a Variety of Sentiments, and consequently Contentions and Divisions?” How can this be, if all closely follow one Rule? To those who are under any wrong Byass, Scripture-Knowledge must be perplexed and uncertain; but to the Unprejudiced, it will be *as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day*; and we shall find that as it was from one end to the other indited by the same Spirit, so it contains invariably the same Truth; and that they who amicably endeavour to discover it will be enriched with an inestimable Treasure; and where they differ will learn to bear with one another, and to cultivate Peace, Love, and Brotherly-Kindness, Virtues superior to the highest Attainments in Knowledge. In this Way indeed, you must discard some of the Principles, which you have embraced as fundamental to Christianity, when in Truth they have nothing to do with it. But surely it will be a happy Exchange to gain the solid Wheat, by throwing away the Chaff, which hath served only to starve the Mind.

WHAT I have said concerning the Principles and Practice of our first Reformers, I am sensible may be taken as an Apology for Mr. *Sloss*. And I am freely willing it should. I own he hath acted in Mr. *Rowson's* Affair upon the Principles, but the *worst* Part of the Principles of the Reformers; not the Principles upon which they separated from the

Church of Rome, but wherein they conformed to her; the Principles of spiritual Tyranny and Persecution. And I am sorry to find Mr. *Slofs* carried so far away with them. That Sentence of his, p. 6. l. 20. giveth me no small Disgust.—*As the Wisdom of civil States hath thought Gibbets, Fines and temporal Punishments necessary for the preserving the Peace of the State; so Jesus Christ hath appointed Church-Censures, for the preserving the Peace and Welfare of religious Societies.*—I wish those Gibbets and Fines had stood at a greater Distance from Church-Censures. Had this come from any other than a Protestant Pen, I should have said it looked with too favourable an Eye upon the cruel Apparatus of the Inquisition. But Mr. *Slofs* declareth, p. 63. *That a revengeful Disposition in desiring the Destruction of the Bodies of Men, is contrary to the Command of God, and the true Spirit of Christianity.* And yet I fear this, which seems to be ex-
 torted by the Force of Argument, will not stand for much, if we consider, *that his Cause must be defended; and that it can be defended only by Argument or Persecution.* Upon the Foot of Argument, Mr. *Ratcliff* proved such a stubborn, litigious, wrangling Person, p. 47. and put so many Questions, which Mr. *Slofs* could not answer, that they could never have brought the Matter to any Issue had they indulged him in that Way. Men of Mr. *Slofs*'s Spirit have the strongest Aversion to Argument. One senseless Question authoritatively proposed, hath ever done more Execution upon Heretics than an Hundred of their Arguments. Their Heads are not turned for Argument; their Cause will not bear it. But bad as it is, *it must be defended*; and there remains no other Way—but Persecution. First, Ill-Will, Ill-Words, Church-Censures. And what if those will not do? What if his Cause is rather hurt than helped by them? Why, still *it must be defended.* Here the secular Arm must be called in, and the wholesome Discipline

Discipline of *Imprisonment, Fines, and Gibbets*. This, whatever Men profess, yea, though they have felt the Smart themselves, is the ordinary Progress of this bitter, antichristian Spirit, where-ever it hath Power *. The *Independents* of *New England* fled thither from the *Laudian* Persecution here at Home, When their Christian Brethren, the *Quakers*, begun to come over into that Country, they were treated with the utmost Rigour by the Ministers and Magistrates. In the Year 1656. a Law was made at *Boston*, prohibiting all Masters of Ships to bring in any *Quakers*, and themselves from coming in, on *Penalty of the House of Correction*. One *Nic. Upsal*, arguing against the Unreasonableness of such a Law, was fined, imprisoned, and lastly banished. This Law not proving effectual, another more cruel was made in 1658. That whoever brought in any *Quakers*, should forfeit one Hundred Pounds; and whoever entertained them, Forty Shillings for every Hour; and both be imprisoned till Payment was made, And that every Male *Quaker* who came in, or should arise among them, for the first and second Offence should have, first the one, then the other of his Ears cut off. A Female for the first Offence was to be whipped; for the second, one of her Ears cut off; for the third Offence *he or she*, should have their Tongues bored through with a hot Iron. And after each of these Instances of Punishment, he or she were to be kept at Work in the House of Correction till they could be sent away at their own Charge. Upon this Law some were scourged in a most barbarous Manner. But a Spirit of Persecution, where its Hands are at Liberty, never stops short of Death. This was still too mild. Norton and others of the Ministers petitioned for a Law to banish *Quakers* upon Pain of DEATH; which was obtained.

Dr. CHANDLER'S History of Persecution, Page 396. A Book which should be in every Family.

obtained. The Crimes in this Law laid to their Charge, were denying civil Respect to Equals, and Superiors, and withdrawing from the Assemblies of these Independent Persecutors, and instead thereof frequenting their own Meetings in Opposition to their *Church-order*, and holding Tenets opposite to the ORTHODOX, received Opinions of the GODLY. And with these *Quakers* they joined any that should vindicate them, or condemn the Proceedings of that Court, who made the Law, as equally guilty with the *Quakers* themselves. Upon this Law they inhumanly murdered several innocent Persons, several of their Priests standing by to see them executed. Thus *W. Robinson*, Merchant, *Marmaduke Stephenson*, *Mary Dyer*, and *W. Leddra*, were hanged at *Boston*, for no other Crime but being *Quakers*. And they would have gone on in this religious Butchery, had not King *Charles II.* put a Stop to those bloody Proceedings by his *Mandamus*. Various were the Cruelties these poor People suffered from Men, who had been persecuted themselves, who had fled to distant Countries from Persecution; from GODLY, ORTHODOX Men, who yet appeared to have no better Principles, no more Charity, Forbearance, Compassion and Humanity, than Bishop *LAUD*, or any of his Brethren, against whom they so bitterly exclaimed.

Ignorance and Persecution of true Religion are consistent with a high Profession of Godliness; and they may really hate Goodness and good Men, who yet pretend no small Love to both. They who slew the *Lord of Life* thought themselves at the Top of Piety and Religion, and said, *If we had been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets*, Matt. xxiii. 30. So much need have we all to consider seriously of what Spirit we are. A blind Zeal will carry religious People to the worst of Actions.

Mr.

Mr. Slofs thinks Mr. Rawson and his Friend *deserve to be exposed, and severely animadverted upon*, p. 16. l. 22. *Pray, Sir, a little Tenderness and Compassion for your Fellow-christians!* But can he by virulent Language expose us worse than he hath done? I hope we have had our full Share of that Kind of Persecution. Will he *severely animadvert* upon us by solid nervous Arguments? Let them be produced. But I fear he means something further, which he thinks we deserve; but, Thanks be to God, and a good Government, is not in his Power to inflict. — I wish my Friend Mr. B—n (for whom my Heart bleeds, that in his old Days he should be drawn into such unchristian Measures) the Deacons and Elders, and the whole Church would examine their Hearts; duly weigh the Nature of the Cause in which they are embarked, and how far such a Spirit might possibly carry them. They have subscribed before all the World, that *some of them were ready to think Mr. Slofs erred on the mild and charitable Side*, with Respect to Mr. Rawson, p. 69. Alas, poor Souls, their Minds were upon the Spring, and, flushed with an ignorant Zeal, ready to make further Excursions.

Mr. Slofs altered the 6th Proposition in the Assembly's Catechism, (where is his boasted Regard to primitive Reformers, and to the Harmony of Creeds and Confessions?) Instead of *Power and Glory*, inserting *all divine Perfections*; and moreover he framed a new Proposition of his own, *That the Lord Jesus Christ is the one, true, supreme God*, &c. quite different from all other Creeds and Confessions. This he owns, and giveth a Reason for it, viz. *That the Questions might answer the particular Turn the Arian Controversy hath taken at this Day, that they might so much the better detect Mr. Rawson's Heresy*, p. 10. l. 6. — So then—If this Gentleman cannot persecute his Fellow-christians upon old Creeds, he both *can and will*

will coin *new* ones. See in this Instance how the Perversion of Religion was begun and carried on. Thus History informs us, the *Nicene* Bishops being resolved to crush the *Arians*, twice changed their Creed to make it strong enough for the Purpose. And other Councils in After-Times, upon no better Principle, made what Alterations they thought fit. But the *Athanasian* Creed hath long been judged, even by *Papists*, the highest Pitch to which the Faith can be skewed. I grant Mr. *Slofs*'s tacit Plea, p. 10. l. 10. That he hath *now* as good a Right to frame and alter Confessions of Faith, as *ever* any Church had. But upon a Review it must shock him a little, that he hath *delivered* a Christian-Brother to *Satan*, for not believing what no Creed-Compilers ever yet insisted upon. Did the very *BONNERS* or *BERTONS* in the *Marian* Persecution, ever change the Terms of Popish Creeds to ensnare Heretics? And why did Mr. *Slofs* change the Words of his Creed?—*To suit and adapt them in such a Manner as might answer the particular Turn the Arian-Controversy hath taken at this Day.* For, saith he, p. 10. — *the modern Arians, ascribe to the Son all the divine Perfections, except Self-origination, necessary Existence, Independency, and absolute Supremacy.* And for this Reason, because he is the *SON*, the only begotten Son of *GOD*. *GOD* is his *GOD* and *FATHER*. How then can he be *self-originated*, or have his Being from none? *Self-origination, independency, and absolute Supremacy*, are in Scripture, constantly ascribed to the *Father* alone, and to the *Son* always the contrary to these expressly and positively. Thus the Men he calls *Arians*, judge; and one would think very truly. But these imaginary *Arians*, are *Heretics*; and Mr. *Slofs* will detect their Heresy. How? By the Rules of Truth? No, but by framing Propositions of his own, in direct Opposition to what those *Arians* hold, and by compelling their Assent to them. Because his supposed

Arians

Arians deny *Christ* is self-existent, independent, and absolutely supreme, therefore *Mr. Sloss* affirms, and will constrain them to affirm, that he is the *one, true, supreme God*. Cannot *Mr. Sloss* see how absurd this Conduct is? Suppose the *Arians* should prove, that if *Jesus Christ* is the *one, supreme God*, *over ALL, and ABOVE ALL*, there can be *no other Person* or Being equal to him; then this Gentleman, and his Society, (for here he joins *them* with himself,) to maintain the Supremacy of the Son, and to detect the *Heretic*, must change the Terms of their Question again; and affirm the Son's *Superiority* to the Father, and the Father's *Subordination* to the Son. For it seems it is a Rule with them ever to turn wrong as the *Arians* turn right. And who can tell how that Faith may chop and change, which is modelled by a Spirit of Contradiction? But are not *Mr. Sloss* and his Society *Christians*? And where is their Regard to the legislative Authority of the Lord *Jesus Christ*? Who gave them a Power to suise and adapt the Rule of Faith at their Pleasure? Is not the Rule one, and the Words and Terms unalterably fixed? Is he and his Church a Society united to improve upon old Errors, instead of peaceably following *the Truth as it is in Jesus*? Then methinks it is a Favour to be turned out of such a Society, and I congratulate *Mr. Rawson* upon his happy Deliverance from it.

In the rest of his Prefatory Discourse, I see nothing fit to be further taken Notice of, except that Argument, p. 13. We say, *The Son of God emptied and humbled himself; that the Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us; that being rich, for our Sakes he became poor, &c.* This is express Scripture. And how doth *Mr. Sloss* reconcile it with his Scheme? Thus—*Hath the God of this World so blinded their Eyes, as not to be able to see that these Things are perfectly consistent with the Unchangeableness of the divine Nature*

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of the Word; which being united to his human Nature in one Person, those Properties which import Changeableness and Mutability, as belonging to his human Nature, which he assumed, come to be AFFIRMED of his whole Person; as on the other Hand, Perfections, which are peculiar to his supreme divine Nature, are AFFIRMED of his WHOLE PERSON also; and of all this THE UNION of his two DISTINCT Natures is the FOUNDATION?

The true State of the Case is this. When the Compilers of Creeds and Confessions had made the Son of God such a Being as could not possibly be sent of God, or *be made Flesh*, or *become poor*, or *empty himself*; when they had made him, in all Respects, equal to his God and Father, who cannot possibly undergo any of these Changes, being necessarily and eternally unchangeable; they found themselves miserably distressed by the whole Current of Scripture; especially those Texts which expressly affirm; that the WORD, who was in the Beginning with God, and was God, by whom all Things were created; that this same Being, this very Word was made Flesh, became a Man, and dwell among us, John i. 1, 2, 3, 14. That being rich, he became poor, 2 Cor. viii. 9. That being in the Form of God, he thought it not Robbery, a Seizure, to be equal, to be like, to God, but emptied himself, so it is in the Greek; he humbled himself, Phil. ii. 6, 7. That the Son of God, appointed Heir of all Things, by whom also God made the Worlds, who was the Brightness of his Glory, the express Image of his Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power; that this very same, most excellent and glorious Being, the Son of God, did by HIMSELF purge our Sins, and afterward sat down on the Right-hand of the Majesty on high. And how can the pretended Orthodox possibly reconcile the express Words, and most evident Sense of these Texts with their Scheme? Error is ever fruitful

ful of Error, and learned Men, when they undertake to defend it, are never at a Loss for one Evasion or other. Thus they go to Work. Besides the *divine Nature* of Christ, they suppose a *human Nature*, consisting of a human Soul and Body. Being thus provided of a Being, a Person, which could be born into the World, be tempted and suffer, they tell us, so far as I can understand them, that CHRIST the Son of God, assumed this human Being or Person; this human Soul and Body, so that his WHOLE PERSON consisted of two PERSONS, or NATURES, the *Divine*, which was the Son of God, *perfect God*, equal to the supreme God in all Perfections; and the *human Nature*, which was born of the *Virgin Mary*, a *perfect Man*, of a *reasonable Soul* and *human Flesh* subsisting.—And how did the Son of God assume this human Soul and Body?—His divine Nature was united to the human in one Person, by a *hypostatical Union*.—And what Sort of Union is that?—It is a *Mystery* above our Understanding to comprehend.—But do the Scriptures any where teach, that the Son of God *was made Flesh*, or became a Man, only as he was *hypostatically* united to the Man *Jesus*?—No; but Things will not bear without supposing this *hypostatical Union*. It is the Pillar of the whole Cause.—And to what Purpose doth it serve?—It furnisheth a Rule of Interpretation; a Key to open the Sense of Scripture. For upon the *Foundation* of this Union, the Properties of the *human Nature*, such as *Ignorance*, *Changeableness*, *Poverty*, &c. may be AFFIRMED of his WHOLE PERSON, and consequently of the *divine* as well as *human Nature*. And the Properties of the *divine Nature*, such as *Unchangeableness*, *Omniscience*, &c. may be AFFIRMED also of his WHOLE PERSON, and consequently of the *human* as well as *divine Nature*. And therefore when it is said of him in his *highest Capacity*, or *divine Nature*,

Nature, that he *was made Flesh, emptied himself, and become poor*, it is true, and, according to this Rule of Interpretation, is to be understood only of his *human Nature*.

But I ask again—Do Christ or his Apostles give us this Rule of Interpretation? Those unjustly called *Arians*, take their Rules of interpreting Scripture from the Scripture itself. But whence do the pretended *Orthodox* take this Rule? They tell us, it is necessary to explain the fundamental Article of Faith, upon the right Understanding of which our eternal Salvation depends. And why then hath the merciful Saviour, the faithful and true Witness, no where given us this Rule? Can we suppose he would leave us utterly at a Loss how to judge and think in a Matter, upon the understanding of which our eternal Salvation depends; and which to our narrow Minds is attended with insuperable Difficulties? And yet in all his Discourses we have not the least Intimation of this Rule, notwithstanding the many Cases which gave him Opportunity, and indeed made it necessary, to hint it, had it been a real and true Rule. Never doth he suggest, this is to be understood of my *human*, that of my *divine* Nature; or the Properties of my *human* Nature may be affirmed of my *whole Person*. A Demonstration to me, that he did not think this Rule needful; and that every Thing relating to his Nature or Person, may be fully understood without it.

But further—This Rule labours under another great Inconvenience, viz. *That it cannot be applied to the Texts it is intended to explain*. For, whereas the FOUNDATION of it, as Mr. *Slofs* tells us, lieth in the UNION of the *divine* Nature with the *human*, these Texts speak only of the *divine* Nature, not as in Union with the *human*, but by itself, singly and separately considered. It was the WORD, not as
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he was already in Union with a *Man*, but the *Word*, in himself considered, the *Word that was in the Begining with God, and was God, by whom all Things were made*; it was that Being or Person considered prior to his becoming a *Man*, who *was made Flesh, and dwelt among us*. It was not a Person immensely rich, united to a Person very poor, who might upon the *Foundation* of that *Union* be affirmed to be poor. No; but it was the rich Person considered *in himself*, and *by himself*, before he came into the World in a State of Poverty; it was that rich Person *distinctly* considered, who afterwards, through his unspeakable Love, for our Sakes became poor. It was not the Person, who was *in the Form of God* in Union with the Person of a *Man*; it was not HE and another PERSON jointly who emptied and humbled himself. No; but it was that very glorious Person, who was *in the Form of God*, considered singly and separately, before he was united, as Mr. *Sless* supposeth, to the *human Nature*, who emptied himself. Were it not that *Men may deny any Thing*, this could not possibly be denied, it stands so clear and strong in Revelation. And thus this Rule of Interpretation fails in the main Design, as it *cannot possibly* be applied to those Texts and several others, which should be explained by it. The Rule stands upon the *Foundation* of a supposed *actual Union* between two Natures, viz. the *Son of God*, and a *human Soul and Body*. But the Texts speak only of one of those *Natures*, viz. the *Son of God* himself, considered not in Union with any other Nature, but singly, by himself, and distinct from all other Persons or Natures, all Souls and Bodies whatsoever. The Rule supposeth the *Son of God*, in Fact, already in such a State, that it may be affirmed of him, *that he was changed*; but the Texts speak of a quite different State, in which he was *before he was changed*, or before it could be affirmed of

of him, that he was changed. And therefore any unprejudiced Person may see, *the Rule shoots vastly wide of the Mark to which it is directed.*

But this is not all—I ask again, Doth this Union make the Thing *really true*, that the Son of God *was made Flesh*, did *empty* and *humble himself*, and *become poor*? — No; for it is impossible, say they, that he who is equal to the Father in *all Perfections*, and consequently in *Unchangeableness*, should in any Respect be *changed*, *emptied*, *humiled* or *made poor*. Only upon the *Foundation* of this Union, it may be *AFFIRMED*, that his *divine Nature* was *emptied*, *humiled* and *made poor*.—So then, after all, this Union doth not shew us that the Son of God really was *made Flesh*, that he really *emptied himself*, and *became poor*; but serveth only to account for a Manner of Speech, that it may be used without being liable to the Charge of a downright Falstiy, though the *Thing* be really false in itself. The Thing, that the Son of God was *emptied*, *humiled*, *made Flesh*, and *became poor*, is really in the Scheme of those who use this Rule of Explication, a Falsthood, and the Union is a *Salvo* for the Manner of speaking. The Thing, with them, is not true, only it may be *AFFIRMED* to be true upon the *Foundation* of this Union. Which Union hath Relation to *WORDS* only, but doth not affect the *Thing itself*, nor hath any Manner of Relation to that. For notwithstanding this Union, the *Word*, the *Son of God*, the *divine Nature of Christ*, which they suppose absolutely unchangeable, did not change, did not *become Flesh*, was not *emptied*, &c. only it might be *AFFIRMED* to *become Flesh*, &c. That is to say, this *byyostatical Union* is a mere Fiction and Illusion, an Absurdity invented to support an Absurdity.

Thus any Man, who hath Courage to open his Eyes, may see that this Scheme SAPS the very FOUNDATION of Christianity, the Incarnation and Sufferings

Sufferings of our LORD. And here they, who undertake the Defence of it, are pinched and galled to the very Soul. And what do they do? Discern their Error and correct it? No; it is upon one *Account or other* an important Article, and *must be defended*. Their learned ingenious Men set their Heads to work, and one invents this *Supposition*, and another that, the Figments of their own Brain, without any Ground in Revelation, and still inconsistent with its plain and obvious Language.

But how clear and easy is the Scripture Account of our BLESSED LORD! And how free from Perplexity are they who admit it upon its own true Principles! Away with your fictitious Unions; it was the *Word* that *was made Flesh*; that very Being and Person, who *was in the Beginning with God*, and *was God*, in great Power, Honour and Authority with the Father, and *by whom he created all things*; that very Being, and *no other*, *was made Flesh*, and *dwelt among us*. That very Being, and no other, who was possessed of heavenly Riches, *for our Sakes became poor*. He who *was in the Form of God*, who appeared in Glory to the Patriarchs and Prophets; he who from the Beginning of the World acted and spake in the Name, and Authority of the Father; he, and no other Person but he, *emptied himself*, and *took upon him the Form of a Servant*. By his VERY SON God *hath spoken unto us in these last Days*, Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. By him, *whom he appointed Heir of all things*, and *by whom also he made the Worlds*; by him, in his own, true, real, proper Person *he hath spoken unto us*. It was that very Being and Person, who was the *Brightness* of the Father's Glory, and the *express Image of his Person*, *upholding all things by the Word of his Power*; it was that very Being who *by HIMSELF purged our Sins*, being made a Sacrifice for us. And to suppose the Son of God to be of such a Nature, that he could not in his own proper Person do those

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things, is to subvert the whole of Christianity, and represent the Gospel as a grand Deception. It was the SON OF GOD, and no other Soul or Spirit, who was born of the *Virgin Mary*, lived in *Subjection* to his Parents, grew in *Wisdom*, was tempted, went about *Judea* teaching and working Miracles, who said, *My Soul is, [or I am *] exceeding sorrowful even unto Death*; who cried out upon the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Who became obedient to Death, who rose again the third Day, ascended into Heaven, and now sits there highly exalted above all Principality and Power, to be a Prince and a Saviour to us sinful Men. And this is the WONDER and the GLORY of the Gospel, that a Being of such supereminent Excellency, Power, and Honour, should give himself for us; that for us Men and our Salvation, he came down from Heaven, and took upon him the Likeness of sinful Flesh. This is Grace, which I make no Doubt raiseth the Admiration of more Worlds than ours. This is the Love of God, for ever to be adored, that he gave his only begotten Son for us; that he spared not his own SON, a Person the dearest to him, and in his highest Esteem, but delivered him up for us all. How astonishing beyond Thought and Expression is the Love of God! How amazing the Grace and Condescension of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! How mighty, how honourable and excellent are the Acts of Love and Righteousness he hath performed in Obedience to God, and in Good-Will to perishing Men! *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing; the Lamb, who hath redeemed us to God by his Blood!* It is a delightful Theme, full of Comfort, Joy and good Hope. Thus we do confess that CHRIST is really, truly and

* See Jud. x. 16. Prov. vi. 16. in the Margin. Jer. xii. 7.—
14, 19,—32, 41. Mat. xii. 18. Heb. x. 38.

and properly, in his own Person, *come in the Flesh*, 1 John iv. 2. We believe and acknowledge, that the WORD, who was with God, and by whom God created all, hath bought and redeemed us with his OWN Blood, the Blood of that Body in which he dwelt, or tabernacled, *amongst us*.

But in Truth, those who embrace the common Schemes, which have for above 13 Hundred Years been imposed upon the Consciences of Christians, by all Manner of spiritual and temporal Tyranny; those Persons, in Effect and by Consequence, do not *confess that CHRIST is come in the Flesh*. For they represent the Son of God to be such a Being, that he could not possibly *come in the Flesh, empty himself, or redeem us with his own Blood*. For being supposed equal to the Father in Nature and all Perfections, he could not possibly admit of any Change of State. Thus, as I have said, by *scholastic Inventions*, they quibble away the very Foundation of Christianity, the *Incarnation* of the Son of God. Thus, in Effect, they *deny that Jesus, the Man Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; thus, in Effect they *deny the SON*, 1 John ii. 22, 23. *The Father sent the SON to be the Saviour of the World*.—iv. 14. But they, in Effect, do not *believe that Jesus, the Man Jesus, who appeared and lived amongst us, is the SON OF GOD*,—v. 5. Thus, in Effect, they *believe not the Record God hath given of his SON, viz. that he sent him into the World, and gave him for us*.—v. 10. And in this they agree with the old *Hereticks*, who first began to corrupt the Christian Faith, by affirming that the *Man Jesus* was not the SON OF GOD, and that the *Son of God* did not *really and actually* live, and suffer in our Flesh, but in Appearance only. This is that very *Antichrist* which was in the World, even in the Apostles Days, and against which they so frequently caution the Christian Churches. See 1 John ii. 18—27.—iv. 1, 2,

3.—v. 1, 5, 10, 20. 2 *John*, ver. 7—11. *Jude* 3, 4. Thus they reduce the Person who called himself *the Son of God*, and suffered at *Jerusalem*, to no more, in Reality, than a *human Soul and Body*; the true *Son of God*, being according to them in such a State, that he could be related to that human Soul and Body, that Man, who was called *Jesus*, no other Way than by a certain Union, which effected nothing. And thus their Scheme ends, in what is reputed *Socinianism*. For in Truth, and Fact, according to them, it was only a *human Soul and Body* in a feigned Union with the *Son of God*, which was born, and suffered upon the Cross, and not the VERY SON OF GOD HIMSELF.

But after all, many honest Men, who neither own nor see the absurd and hurtful Consequences of their own Opinions, and who, as well as we, fear God, and through his Grace, hope for Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, will I doubt not, through Infirmary and Want of proper Evidence, retain these groundless and confused Notions of our Redeemer. What must we do in this Case? Hate, revile and cast out one another? God forbid. Let Men of intemperate Zeal give into such unchristian Measures; we abhor and disclaim them. Persecution is such an heinous Sin in the Sight of God, and we are so unfit to be Judges one of another, that we dare do nothing unkind or cruel to those who differ from us. WE ARE FOR PEACE and LOVE with ALL CHRISTIANS. Wickedness should ever be hateful to us, but Weakness of Judgment, and Error of Understanding, are consistent with Integrity. Many a good Man hath been in a great Mistake. Here then the Spirit of the Gospel, Charity, and mutual Forbearance, ought to take Place, according to the Commands and Exhortations of our LORD and his Apostles, *Mat. v. 5, 7, 9. Blessed are the Meek; blessed are the Merciful; blessed are the Peace-makers.*

John

John xiii. 34, 35. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* Rom. xii. 9, 10.—xv. 1, 5. 1 Cor. i. 10.—xiii. 1, 2, 3. *Though a Man speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity [Love to his Christian Brother] he is become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. And though he hath the Gift of Prophecy, and understands all MYSTERIES, and all Knowledge; and though he hath all FAITH, so that he could remove Mountains, and hath no Charity, no Love to his Christian Brother, he is NOTHING. And though he bestows all his Goods to feed the Poor, And though he giveth his Body to be burnt, and hath not Charity, it profiteth him nothing.* 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Gal. v. 9. Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, 31, 32.—v. 1, 2. Phil. ii. 1, 2, 3. Col. iii. 8. *Put off all those, Anger, Wrath, Malice;—ver. 12. Put on (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you, so do ye.*—ver. 14. Heb. xiii. 1. *Let brotherly Love continue.* James iii. 14, &c. How sweet and amiable! How kind and friendly is the Spirit of the Gospel! How frequently is Love inculcated, and bound upon our Consciences by the most positive Precepts, the most forcible Arguments, and endearing Considerations! Can any thing be more certain in the Rules of our Religion, than that we ought to suppress all turbulent Passions, Quarrels and Contention, and exercise all Humility, Tenderness, Peaceableness? Is it any thing near so plain, that we ought to cite and arraign, judge and condemn our Brother, especially upon any disputable Points, as that we ought to be of a charitable Disposition towards him?

But Mr. *Slofs* hath wrote a small Treatise, upon the Right of religious Societies to exclude heretical and unruly Members; which, with his other Principles,

would throw us all into a State of perpetual Hatred, War and Confusion. *Heretics*, and *scandalous Offenders*, are to be excommunicated, and *delivered to Satan*. But from the Scripture, the only Rule of our Religion, he doth not attempt to give one single Mark, by which we may judge, who are *Heretics*, and *scandalous Offenders*, excepting that of *Fundamental Errors*; which, according to him, are what any one is pleased to make them. Here then Mr. *Sloss* proposeth a Method of purging the Church, which will equally suit all Sides, and serve any Cause, how bad soever. He hath judged Mr. *Rawson* a *Heretic*; Mr. *Rawson* hath as much, if not more, Reason to judge him a *Heretic*. He hath excommunicated Mr. *Rawson*, and Mr. *Rawson*, had he Power, might excommunicate him. Thus Censure and Malice might walk their Rounds, and prompt us to *bite and devour one another, till we were consumed one of another*. For, if we have no certain Rules of Church-Fellowship, no determinate Criterion whereby we can be assured any Person is a *Heretic*, we are left to all the Caprice of Fancy, Humour, or Passion; and any Man may, to gratify his Pride, or Ill-Nature, make any Man an *Heretic* at Discretion, and under an odious Name, do him all the Mischief in his Power. But hath the merciful and benevolent *Jesus*, the great Teacher and Example of Love and Goodness, thus left us to tear and abuse one another without Reason, and without End? You say, p. 29. *It is true, this Key of Discipline may be turned a wrong Way, and abused to very vile Purposes; in which Case it becomes void and null, a mere empty Sound and Noise, without any Effect, &c.* And if so, should not you upon solid Grounds of Scripture have shewn, that in Mr. *Rawson's* Case, you have not abused this Ordinance, and turned the *Key of Discipline a wrong Way*? But for any thing you have advanced, it appears to me in this Light, viz. “ That you
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“ and your Society have either *ignorantly*, or *presump-*
 “ *tuously*, set yourselves in the Temple of God, upon
 “ the Throne of CHRIST, usurping that Dominion
 “ over the Faith and Consciences of his professed
 “ Disciples, which belongs to him alone. You
 “ have taken upon you to alter the Terms of *Cbri-*
 “ *stian Communion* here, and of *eternal Salvation* here-
 “ after. Instead of the common Rule of our Faith,
 “ delivered by the Spirit of God in Scripture, you
 “ have devised Propositions in your *own Words*,
 “ and according to your *own Judgment*, as TESTS
 “ of Christian Faith and Doctrine; and herein
 “ you have in *Words* gone beyond *all the Corrupters*
 “ of true Religion, even the Church of Rome itself.
 “ And upon your own devised Propositions, you
 “ have branded as an *Heretic*, and cast out of the
 “ Church, a Disciple of *Jesus Christ*, who openly
 “ before you all professed his Faith in him, accord-
 “ ing to, and in the Words of, the Scriptures of
 “ Truth, for no other Reason, than because he
 “ refused to profess his Christian Faith according
 “ to the *Sense* of your Propositions.” *This you*
have done. Which to me, judging by the Rules of
 the Gospel, appears to be a Deed UNJUSTIFIABLE,
 WICKED, and ABOMINABLE. You have perverted
 the Gospel; you have changed the Laws of *Christ's*
 Kingdom; you have assumed his Authority to your-
 self; and not only so, but you also endeavour to
 establish your own *evil Deeds* into a general Rule,
 by inviting and persuading *Protestant Dissenters* to
copy after the Example you have set before them, p.
 16. l. 28. That you have drawn up Propositions
 in your *own Words*, and according to your *own*
 Judgment, as TESTS of true Christian Faith, in-
 stead of Scripture Words, you acknowledge; you
 own the Propositions; you have published them
 yourself, p. 65, 66. you justify them, by alledging,
 that in the Case of *Heresy*, *Scripture-Words* are not

a sufficient Mean to know whether Persons are sound, or take the Scripture in a true Sense, p. 50. in the Note. That you have in this Way changed the Rule of Faith even beyond *any*, who have been so *bold* as to change it at all, you also confess, and undertake to justify, by alledging, that it was done for this End, that *the Terms of your Questions might answer the particular Turn, the Arian Controversy hath taken at this Day, p. 10. l. 8.* That upon your own devised Propositions you have branded as an *Heretic*, and cast out of the Church, Mr. *Joseph Rawson*, then a Member of your Society, for no other Reason than because he refused to profess his Christian Faith according to the Sense of your *own* Propositions; you and your Society have given the Public a plain and express Account in the Book I am now examining. Therefore the Truth of these Facts will bear no Dispute. You *vindicate* them, you *glory* in them. You and your *Fellow-Pastor*, your surviving *Elder*, and your Three *Deacons*, have attested and avowed them in the Face of the Christian World, by a formal Subscription of your Names. *I am heartily grieved, and sorry for it.* But you have made the thing certain, and put yourselves beyond a Possibility of denying or evading it.

Therefore Mr. *Slofs's* Business is not to amuse the World by pleading in general for the *Right of religious Societies to exclude heretical Members*; but to make his Cause good, he should prove, and he is publicly challenged to prove, the Three following Propositions.

I. That, according to the Writings of the New Testament, a simple Mistake of Judgment, in understanding the Scriptures, constituteth a Man an Heretic, although he sincerely endeavours to know and practise the Truth. I deny it; let him prove it.

Scripture

Scripture *Heresy* is a *Work of the Flesh*, and comes under the same general Notion with Adultery, Fornication,—Hatred, Strife, Seditions,—Murthers,—and such like. See *Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.* The Scripture *Heretic* is described at large, *Acts xx. 29, 30. 2 Tim. iii. 1—7. Tit. i. 10—14.* There the very *Heretics* are described, whom *Titus* was to reject, *2 Pet. ii.* throughout. *1 John ii. 18, 19. 2 John 6—7.* The Epistle of *Jude*.

II. That any Propositions, supposed to be drawn ever so truly or exactly from Scripture by him, or any other Man, in his own Words, and after his own Judgment, are, by Divine Warrant, a Standard, by which the Sentiments of Christians may, and ought to be tried, whether they be sound, and agreeable to the Sense of Scripture. I deny it; let him prove it.

III. That the LORD Jesus Christ hath given him, or any other Man, Authority in his Name to cast out of Communion any professed Christian, who shall reject any Propositions, or the Sense of any Propositions, drawn by him from Scripture, to the best of his own Judgment, as Standards and Tests of Gospel Faith and Doctrine. I deny it; let him prove it.

These are the Points Mr. *Slofs* is to prove, if he will make good his Cause, and convince *Protestant Dissenters*, they may safely copy after his Example. And whenever he thinks fit to deliver his Sentiments upon these Propositions, he may expect to have them examined with Candour and Impartiality. In opposition to the Two last of these Propositions, I venture to affirm—that the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith, in Matters of Revelation, to all *Christians*. That the Words of that Rule, as delivered to us by the Spirit of God, are essential to it; for take away the Words, and you take away the

the Rule, as delivered to us by the Spirit of God, *i. e.* as it is the Object of our Faith. That no Propositions, but such as are the *direct express* Propositions of Scripture, are the Standard and Test of Christian Faith and Doctrine. That, though we may use any Means of understanding Scripture, or causing it to be understood, yet no Man hath any Authority to deliver his own Judgment, or his own Sense of Scripture, in his own Words, instead of the Scripture itself, as obligatory upon Conscience; for then he will have Authority to change the Rule of Faith, as his Judgment and Words happen to change; and so the Rule will be made uncertain and arbitrary, at the Will of proud or ignorant Men. Moreover, *as we being many are one Body in Christ, as we are called and baptized into ONE BODY, in the Unity of Faith and Spirit*, if particular Men, or particular Christian Societies, have a Right to make their own Deductions from Scripture the Standard of Faith, and the Terms of Communion, then possibly there will be as many different Terms of Communion, and Standards of Faith, as there are Christian Societies; and then the Body of Christ will be disjointed and divided into MANY BODIES; the Unity of Faith will be dissolved; and the *Unity of Spirit, Love and Peace*, will be turned into *Party-Zeal, Animosity and Variance*. *And this, as I take it, hath been for many Ages, and still is, the unhappy, UNCHRISTIAN State of the Christian World.* Further I advance, while we all profess the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith, while we all assent to the *Words* thereof, and believe in CHRIST according to the best Light we can, *every one of us for ourselves*, derive from thence; we have indeed *Liberty* to inform and instruct one another, but we have no *Right as JUDGES*, to enquire into one another's Sentiments, to set up our own Propositions or Notions for Standards to other Men, nor to reject any Christian because

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he doth not think and speak as we do. To his own Master he stands or falls, and not to us. Or in *Mr. Slo's* own Words, p. 23. As every Man must give an Account of himself unto God, and answer for his own Soul, so he hath a Right to PRIVATE JUDGMENT, independent of any Man, or Society of Men whatsoever. Nor can any claim a Right over the Consciences of others, or exercise any Authority over them, farther than he is able to enlighten them ministerially by Reason and Scripture, and laying before them the Precepts of the Word, and enjoining the Commands of CHRIST, and declaring HIS Will, which ALONE binds the Conscience. How Mr. Slo's suffered this to escape him, I cannot imagine; certainly it ruineth his whole Cause.

This Gentleman, if I am not much mistaken, giveth a very wrong and imperfect Account of *delivering to Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh*, p. 34. Destroying the Flesh is a thing quite different from mortifying of it. Mortifying the Flesh is the voluntary Act of a Person keeping his Body in Subjection by Temperance. But the Flesh is destroyed only by Death or Disease, which corrupt and consume it. The Destruction of the Flesh, mentioned 1 Cor. v. 5. was not a voluntary thing; was not an Act of Virtue; but was to be inflicted upon the Offender by external Force, against his Will. Satan was to destroy his Flesh. For according to the common Opinion and Language of the Jews, Diseases were ascribed to Satan, or evil Spirits; and an evil Spirit, and a Disease, were sometimes synonymous*. So Luke xiii. 11. There was a Woman who had a Spirit of Infirmary. And our Saviour, ver. 16. saith, ought not this Woman whom Satan hath bound, i. e. who hath so long been miserably crooked, and bowed down. Therefore to deliver a Man unto Satan, was to subject him to some grievous Distemper, to pain and

* LIGHTFOOT'S *Heb. and Talm. Exercit. on Luke xiii. 11.* Vol. II. p. 441. And on 1 Cor. v. 5. p. 749, 750.

and macerate the Flesh. The Case is this. Besides the salutary Miracles which God wrought by the Hands of the Apostles, he thought fit their Ministry should be attended with a POWER of inflicting *Death or Disease*, to correct Disorders; which otherwise would have ruined Christianity in its Rise and Infancy. To reclaim bold and daring Offenders, and to strike a Terror into others. So *Ananias and Sapphira* were struck dead; *Elymas* the Sorcerer blind; the Sons of *Sceva* stripped and wounded by an evil Spirit, *Acts* xix. 16. The *Corinthians*, for their Irregularities in Divine Worship, were *many of them sick and weak*, and *many of them dead*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 30. This, I doubt not, is the Rod the Apostle speaks of, 1 *Cor.* iv. 21. alluding, probably to the *Rod of Moses*, wherewith he smote *Pharaoh*, and the *Egyptians*. He refers to this *Power*, 2 *Cor.* x. 6. *Having, a Power, in Readiness to revenge all Disobedience, when the Obedience of such as will take Warning and amend, is fulfilled.* And — xiii. 2. *I told you before—and now write to them who have sined, and to all other, that if [when] I come again, I shall not spare.* And, ver. 10. *I write these things being absent, lest, when I am present, I should use SHARPNESS; according to the POWER which the Lord hath given me to Edification, and not to Destruction.* For, ver. 8. *we can, by this POWER, do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth.* And, ver. 9. *glad the Apostle was, when he was WEAK, and the Corinthians were STRONG; i. e. when, by their obedient Regards to the Truth, they had disarmed him of this POWER, which he could not then exercise.* And this is one Instance of the *Apostolic Power*, to *bind*, and *loose*, to *retain* and *remit Mens Sins*, viz. the inflicting and removing bodily Distempers; and not what *Mr. Slo's* supposeth, viz. the *peculiar Virtue* of his absurd Sentence of Excommunication to reach the Conscience, p. 29.

From all this it is easy to see, that to deliver to Satan
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for the Destruction of the Flesh, was something miraculous, which belonged solely to the Apostolic Office. For the Apostle claims it wholly to himself, under God and our Lord Jesus Christ. And none but an Apostle did ever exercise this Power. It was the Apostle himself who delivered unto Satan Hymeneus and Alexander, Two Apostates, who having renounced Christianity, opposed the Apostle, not without virulent abusive Language, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. In this Case, he struck them with the Apostolic Rod, inflicted some severe bodily Punishment upon them, to check their Insolence, and confound their Blasphemy. It was not the Church at Corinth, that delivered the incestuous Person to Satan, but the Apostle himself threatened to do it. For so the Words expressly run, 1 Cor. v. 3. For I verily as absent in the Body, but present in Spirit, have already judged, determined and decreed, as tho' I were present, concerning him that hath so done this Deed; in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit with the Power of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have judged, decreed or purposed, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of our Lord. Parallel to this last Clause is 1 Cor. xi. 32. But when, or whereas, we are judged, by Sicknes, Weakness and Death, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not at last be condemned with the World. It was the Apostle, who purposed to strike the incestuous Person with the Apostolic Rod. The Corinthian Church were indeed to reprehend and chide him for his Fault, 2 Cor. ii. 6. It was their Duty to put him away from among them, and not to accompany with him, till he repented and reformed, 1 Cor. v. 2, 9, 13. But this was all they could do, and all the Apostle expected from them; and he blameth them, that they had not done it before; and their Negligence was one Reason why he shook the Apostolic Rod over the Offender's

sender's Head, to bring them, as well as him, to a Sense of Duty. But it must be carefully observed, that the Apostle never *actually* struck the Offender, or *delivered him over to Satan*. No; the *Corinthians* were sorry for their Negligence, and immediately applied themselves to their Duty, in reproving and disowning the guilty Person; who by such Discipline, and the Apostolic Threatening, was brought to such a Sense of his Crime, that there was Danger *he should be swallowed up of too much Sorrow*. Therefore the Apostle shewed him Favour, or, as we translate it, *forgave him*; 2 Cor. ii. 9. *i. e.* did not strike him with the *Apostolic Rod*; but declared, *ver. 6. the Punishment*; it should have been rendered, *Rebuke*, which was (not *inflicted*, for that is not in the *Greek*, but) *given by many, i. e.* the whole Congregation, or the greatest Part of them; the Apostle declared this *Rebuke* by the Congregation, as it had the desired Effect, SUFFICIENT, without the severer Stroke of the Rod. This you have at large, 2 Cor. ii. 1--11. For a fuller Explication of this Affair, see the *Appendix*.

From all this I conclude, I. That the Apostles had the Power of *Christ* attending their Ministry, to strike Offenders with Death or Disease, as Occasion required, whether the Persons were present or absent. II. That all the POWER Christians have, or ever at any Time had, is to observe what appears scandalous in the Conversation of their Fellow Christians, to admonish them, to disown those that refuse to reform, and to shun their Society. And this is all the POWER that can possibly be proved from Reason and Scripture, that Christians have over one another. III. Not they that are mistaken in their Opinions, but sober in their Lives, are to be disowned; but the Apostle hath expressly written, 1 Cor. v. 11. that Christians should not keep Company, *if any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Co-*
vetous,

vetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat.

Mr. Sloss in his *True Narrative*, hath confirmed the principal Facts in Mr. Rawson's, and disproved several in his own. He indeed charges Mr. Rawson with *Misrepresentations* and *Falshoods*; but he is so apt to give things improper Names, that I am cautious of Assent. Especially, because he no where appeals to the AUTHENTIC RECORDS of the Society, from which he, or some of his Friends, promised in Two printed Advertisements, (the one put into several News Papers, the other dispersed about the Country in single Scraps) to publish a true Account of Mr. Rawson's Affair. Both these Advertisements are in Substance the same, and run thus. *Whereas Joseph Rawson, together with other of the Arian Party, have published a false Narrative of his Case,—these are to give Notice—that the Congregation will in a short Time publish a true Account of that Affair, from the AUTHENTIC RECORDS of the Society, subscribed by several of the principal Members thereof.* Here Mr. Sloss, or some of his Friends, did more than affirm, in the Face of all Mankind, that they had Records, authentic Records, in which they had entered Mr. Rawson's Affair; they promise the World a faithful Copy or Extract from those Records. And why then no Appeal to them in all Mr. Sloss's Narrative? Must it not be, either because they have no such Records; or, if they have, because those Records do not confirm Mr. Sloss's Accounts? He and his Society cannot be ignorant how they are charged upon this Head. I wish they would unravel the Affair a little, and make it appear, that we have no Ground from this Part of their Conduct to observe, *that a persecuting Spirit sticketh at nothing to serve its own Cause, and leads to all Manner of Falshood.*

Mr. Sloss represents Mr. Rawson as a pitiful Fool set up by the Arian Party in and about the Place, to sow
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the Seeds of Heresy and Division among them, p. 9. Again, The Arian Party have made use of him, as a Tool, to do our Society all the Mischief they could, p. 48.—By this one would imagine Mr. Rawson was the Aggressor, that he begun to practise upon the Congregation first, and to broach his Sentiments among them with an Intent to raise Disturbances. But Mr. Sloss in other Places gives us to understand, that he and his Society were the original Authors of all the Disturbance. They entertained Suspicions of Mr. Rawson, p. 57, 65. They were informed, and he was reputed to have drank in the Arian Heresy, p. 64. For a Year together they pumped him by one or other of their Members, and inquired into his Sentiments, put several Questions to him; his Answers increased their Suspicion; at last, contrary to his Intent or Desire, they called him before them; he appeared; denied their Authority to inquire into his Sentiments; they sift and examine him; put the Question to him, p. 65. Bring their Witnesses for yet fuller Evidence, p. 58. And were even forced to new-model their own Creed, by suiting and adapting the Terms of their Questions, that they might so much the better detect his Heresy, p. 10. It is undeniably plain; Mr. Sloss and his Society were the first and grand Movers in the Affair. They themselves, if he was a Tool, set him up for a Tool. They broke in upon their own Peace, and his too; and were the Cause of all the Mischief done to themselves and him. Mr. Rawson, it is evident, was entirely passive, and acted only as he was compelled by them. And yet he is represented as a turbulent seditious Person. This is the true Spirit of Persecution. So our LORD and his Apostles were accused of Sedition. When Men of intemperate Zeal have raised Disturbances; and in the Heat of Opposition have thrown all things into Confusion, then they add Iniquity to Iniquity, by charging the Mischief they themselves have done, upon the peaceable Professors of Truth.

And

And why must Mr. Rawson be loaded with the opprobrious Name of an Offender, a scandalous, notorious Offender? p. 7, 10, &c. Is he an Offender because he could not think with Mr. Sloss? But what Fault in that? Can a Man force himself to think or believe as he pleaseth? The Persuasion of the Mind doth not depend upon the Choice of the Will, but upon Information, Light, and Evidence. How could Mr. Sloss p. 68. expect, Mr. Rawson should repent of his believing what he was convinced was the Truth? — Is he a scandalous Offender, because he rejected Mr. Sloss's usurped Authority and Jurisdiction over Conscience? In that he acted as became a good Christian, and will be justified and honoured, by all who truly love and honour our LORD Jesus Christ. — But he denied the true Divinity of our Lord, p. 53. It is false. Mr. Rawson did own the true Divinity of our LORD before them all, when he confessed, that God made all things by him, and that he is the universal Saviour, Lord, and Judge. See Mr. Rawson's Narrative, p. 31.

But we are told, they set a Day apart for Humiliation and Prayer, for Light and Direction in the Affair of Mr. Rawson's Suspension, p. 65. But what Light and Direction can People expect, when they wilfully shut their Eyes against the Light and Truth God hath already given them in his Word? It is like a Man's praying God would feed and sustain him, when he refuseth to eat his Meat. And may we not put the Face of Religion upon Actions which contradict the Laws and Spirit of it? What saith the Prophet? *Isaiah lviii. 4. Behold, ye fast for Strife and Debate, and to smite with the Fist of Wickedness. Even Fasting is consistent with the bitterest Persecution, and most flagrant Injustice, 1 Kings xxi. 9, 10.*

The Affectation of the Terms of Ecclesiastical Courts, citing, summoning, sentencing, &c. are quite out of the Spirit and Style of the Gospel. And

where in Scripture will he find any Difference between *Suspension* and *Excommunication*; or the greater and lesser *Excommunication*? They are the Fiction of the Schools, and have no Foundation in the Sacred Writings. There is no *Medium*, according to Gospel-Rules, between *putting a Man away from among us*, and owning him as a Christian Brother. For to put him away, whilst his Offence is doubtful, is more than we can justify. *The delivering a Man to Satan*, is a thing quite different from *Excommunication*, and so peculiar to the *Apostolic* Office, that in my Thoughts, he who should now-a-Days pretend to assume, and shake the *Apostolic Rod*, in *delivering a Person over to Satan*, would act but like a poor Lunatic in *Bedlam*, who fancies himself a King, plats Crowns of his Bed-straw, and struts and raves in the Style of Royalty.—But Mr. *Slofs* means no more by *delivering to Satan*, than *declaring a Person re-delivered to the Kingdom of Satan*, p. 35. l. 2. And yet this doth not seem to stand right. To be in the *Kingdom of Satan*, according to Scripture-Language, is to be under heathenish Darkness and Idolatry, *dead in Trespasses and Sins*. And I would gladly know, what Sense there can be in a Man's being delivered into that Condition, or what End can be answered? But if Mr. *Slofs* intended by this Phrase, of *re-delivering to the Kingdom of Satan*, to soften his *delivering Mr. Rawson over to Satan*, why did he not use that Expression in the Form of *Excommunication*? Why did he not suit and adapt his Terms for once, to the Purposes of Charity? Was it because he had a sacred Regard to Scripture-Words? But, to *detest the Heretic*, he departed from them at Pleasure. And it is worth his while to consider, if a Spirit of Persecution did not prompt him to retain in the Sentence a Scripture-Phrase of so dreadful Sound, to answer another Turn, to blacken the supposed Offender, and represent him to weak Minds as the vilest

vilest of Men, in the most wretched and abandoned Condition.

It was absurd in Mr. Sloss to address his Sentence to an absent Man. But his using the holy Name, by which we are called, the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give Sanction to an Act so foolish and anti-christian, is perfectly shocking.

These *Reflections* I have made without any Expectation of the least temporal Advantage. I covet no Man's Money; I court no Man's Favour; I thank God, I fear no Man's Displeasure. I know whom I have trusted, even Jesus, *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, mighty to save, who will give Reward unto his Servants, small and great.* I write with no other View than to serve the Truth, the Cause of Christian Liberty, Love and Peace; my good Friends at Nottingham, the Society of Castle-gate, and even Mr. Sloss himself, whose Welfare in all Respects I sincerely desire; and heartily wish he may readily admit what he sees to be TRUE, and clearly discover, and unanswerably confute whatever is FALSE. I am sorry he hath given the Publick such an indifferent Picture of himself, and that it was not in my Power to set him in a better Light. I can truly say, my Design is not to expose him, but to represent the false and mischievous Nature of *Persecution*. A popish, anti-christian Spirit, I will ever oppose, as God shall enable me; but notwithstanding any mere Difference of Opinion, I cordially embrace him in the kindest Arms of *Christian Love*. And when, O when will the glorious Day shine upon our World, when Meekness, Forbearance, Charity, and Brotherly-Kindness, shall flourish among Christians! When, setting aside all Party-Schemes, — Zeal, and — odious Distinctions, all selfish Views, all worldly Emoluments, all Pride and Bigotry, all Prejudice and Prepossession, all Envy, Wrath and Bitterness, we shall receive one

another upon the true scriptural Terms of Christian Communion, *that with one Heart, and with one Mouth, we may all glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?* When shall we see the Error and Mischief of that detestable Principle, *that Difference of Judgment, in finding out the true Sense of Scripture, strips a Man of his Christian Character, and giveth us a Right to abuse him?* When will the happy State of things be erected, wherein the *Witnesses* of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, who honestly endeavour to vindicate the Truth; as it is in him, shall no longer *prophesy clothed in Sackcloth**, under the heavy Burthen of unrighteous Censure and Insult? **COME, LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY.**

• Rev. xi. 3.



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The APPENDIX.

COMMENTATORS seem to me not to have rightly understood the Sense and Spirit of the Passages in the two Epistles to the *Corinthians*, relating to the *incestuous Person*. I submit the following *Paraphrase* and *Remarks* to the Judgment of the Learned.

I COR. Chap. IV.

Ver. 18. *Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.*

19. *But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the Speech of them that are puffed up, but the POWER.*

20. *For the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in POWER.*

Ver. 18. But while * I only send Messengers, and defer my coming to *Corinth* in Person, some grow insolent, and dare to contemn my apostolic Mission and Authority.—But by the Divine Permission, I intend to be with you in a little Time; and then I shall examine not only the eloquent Discourses of those insolent Persons, but I purpose to have a Trial of Power with them.—For under the present Dispensation, the Gospel is not only declared to us by *Words* and *Arguments*;

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* Ver. 18. ΩΣ μὴ ἐρχομαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, &c. Chap. v. 3. ὡς ἄνωγ. Ως, as well as *ut* in Latin, is used *χρονικῶς*, or with Relation to Time, in all Authors, and frequently in the *New Testament*. It signifieth WHEN, *Luke* i. 23, 44.—ii. 15, 39.—iv. 25.—v. 4.—xi. 1.—* xv. 25.—xix. 41. *John* ii. 23. And many other Places. WHILE, *Luke* xxiv. 32. *John* xx. 11. *Acts* i. 10.—x. 17.—xiii. 25.—xvi. 4.—xxii. 25. But while I come not myself unto you, some are puffed up.

but it is, in all those who have a true *apostolic* Mission, attended with the mighty POWER of God, either working salutary Miracles, or inflicting Judgments upon the obstinately disobedient. — And I desire you would *all* consider, whether you choose I should come among you in Severity or Clemency. For as you behave, I shall appear, either with the Terrors of the apostolic Rod, † or in Love, and the Spirit of Gentleness. — And there is a Case, which, in the mean while, will put your Obedience to the Proof. All the World knows you entertain amongst you, a Person, who is guilty of a Species of Fornication, to which even the Heathens themselves are Strangers; a Person, who cohabits with his Father's Wife. — And you truly, instead of being grieved at this scandalous Fact, and instead of removing the Offender from among you, are led by Party Zeal and Pride to connive at him, and screen him. — But how careless or disorderly soever you are, I am resolved to do my Duty; and therefore I do tell you assuredly,* that even *now*, while I am

21. *What will ye? Shall I come unto you with the ROD, or in Love, and in the Spirit of Meekness?*

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *It is reported commonly, that there is Fornication among you, and such Fornication, as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his Father's Wife.*

2. *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this Deed might be taken away from among you.*

3. *For I verily as absent in Body, but present in Spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this Deed.*

† Ver. 21. *Passes, the Rod*, hath evident Reference to *Summus*, Power, in the two foregoing Verses.

* Ver. 3. *Εγώ μὲν γὰρ*, is manifestly spoken in opposition to the

4. *In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the Power of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

5. *To deliver such a one unto Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.*

6. *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump?*

the Corinthians. You through a factious, insolent Spirit neglect your Duty. But I truly

Authority and Resolution. ¶ *Ως αραυ.* See the Note, Chap. IV. 18.

† The 4th Verse is in a Parenthesis, and may be read after the 5th.

§ 1 Thess. ii. 17.

¶ I am absent in Person, but present with you *in Spirit*, [in a real Concern, and Resolution to assert my apostolic Authority, and correct your Disorders] I have determined — Ver. 5. † to deliver the Man, who is guilty of this foul Crime, to *Satan*, to pain and consume his wanton Flesh; that being humbled, and brought to true Repentance, his Spirit may be saved in the Day of our Lord. — Ver. 4. This Stroke I shall inflict by the Authority of *Jesus Christ*; in an Assembly of your Church, where my Spirit, my Heart and Consent, § shall be with you, attended with the Almighty Power of our Lord Jesus Christ. [This I am determined to do, unless you prevent it, by performing the Duty, you have hitherto neglected.] — Ver 6. Your glorying in your new Leader, which hath hindered you from doing your Duty in this Case, is highly blameable, and of pernicious Tendency. Know ye not that Wickedness, like Leaven, is

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of

of a spreading Nature? — Purge out therefore the Leaven of Uncleanness from among you, that you may be a new and pure Mass according to the Profession you make, and the Obligations you are under to true Holiness. For Christ our Passover is slain for us — Then, as the *Jews*, after the Passover, kept the Feast of unleavened Bread, an Emblem of an holy Life, let us renounce all former Wickedness, and live according to the most perfect Rules of Truth. — You should have put away this Fornicator, from amongst you, upon the Instructions I have already given you, without any further Interposition of mine: For I wrote to you before, that you should not keep Company with Fornicators. — Meaning, not that you should have no Manner of Conversation with the unconverted Heathens that are lewd and vicious. For then it is not possible you should do any Business in the World. — But if you mistook me before, I tell you now expressly, you are to have no Society with a professed Christian, who is Lewd, Covetous, an Idolater, Railer, Drunkard, Extortioner, no, not so much as to eat with him. — Not those who are out of the Church, whom

7. *Purge out therefore the old Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*

8. *Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness; but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.*

9. *I wrote unto you in an Epistle, not to accompany with Fornicators.*

10. *Yet not altogether with the Fornicators of this World, or with the Covetous, or Extortioners, or with Idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the World.*

11. *But now I have written unto you, not to keep Company, if any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat.*

12. *For what have I to do to judge them also that*

that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?

13. *But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked Person.*

whom we leave to the Judgment of God, but those who are Members of it, come under the Rules of Christian Discipline. — Wherefore, if you have any Regard to me, or any Concern to prevent the threatened Stroke of the apostolic Rod, I charge you, * apply yourselves immediately to the putting away of that incestuous Person.

About the Success of this *apostolic* Threatening and Command, *Paul* was prodigiously solicitous. After the Letter he sent *Titus*, and another Christian Brother to *Corinth*, probably to observe, and bring him Word, what Effect it had, 2 *Cor.* xii. 18. And very uneasy he was, till *Titus* returned, 2 *Cor.* ii. 12, 13. But greatly comforted, when he found the *Corinthians* were rightly affected with this, and other Parts of his Letter, and had applied themselves, with a Mixture of Sorrow and Zeal to the reforming of this and other Disorders; had openly rebuked the Fornicator, and disowned Communion with him; by which he was brought to deep Humiliation. This, probably, the *Corinthians* had desired *Titus* to notify to the Apostle; and that they were expecting his further Orders about the incestuous Person. Upon this he wrote to them as follows,

2 COR. Chap. II.

Ver. 4. *For out of much Affliction and Anguish of Heart, I wrote unto you with many Tears;*

Ver. 4. With a heavy Heart, and weeping Eyes, I wrote unto you about the Case of the incestuous

* Ver. 13. *Kai eḡapeite ton porneon eḡ uman auton.* Is a smart peremptory, authoritative, and menacing Way of speaking. q. d. *I charge you put him away.*

incestuous Person; not to cause your Sorrow; but in Truth to give a Demonstration of my strong Affection to you.—In my Letter I addressed myself to the whole Congregation; but that Affair gave me uneasiness only * as to that Part which fideth with your new Leader. I did not question the right Obediente of the rest. It is proper I should inform you of this, that I may not lay, or continue a Burthen of Sorrow where it is not due.—As to the Case of that unhappy Person; seeing the REBUKE, § given by the whole Congregation, hath had such good Effects upon him,

Tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the Love which I have more abundantly unto you.

5. *But if any have caused Grief, he hath not grieved me, but in Part; that I may not overcharge you all.*

6. *Sufficient to such a Man is this Punishment, which was inflicted of many.*

* *Ver. 5.* ΑΛΛ' is here for *et* *ut*, as *Matt. xx. 23.* Or we may suppose an Ellipsis. Thus; *He hath occasioned Grief to me [with respect to the whole Congregation] but only as to a Part of you.* *Ibid.* ΑΡΟ ΜΕΡΟΥΣ. *St. Paul* commonly useth this Phrase to signify a Part of those People to whom he writes. See *Rom. xi. 25.*—*xv. 15.*—*2 Cor. i. 14.* And *Whitby* upon this Place.

§ *Ver. 6.* ΕΡΙΣΤΙΜΙΑ, the Noun, is used only in this Place of the *New Testament*. But the Verb, ΕΡΙΣΤΙΜΑΩ, from whence it is derived, occurs frequently; and always signifieth to rebuke, to charge strictly; but never to punish. See *Mat. viii. 26.*—*xii. 16.*—*xvi. 22.*—*xvii. 18.*—*xix. 13.*—*xx. 31.* *Mark i. 25.*—*iii. 12.*—*iv. 39.*—*viii. 30, 32, 33.*—*ix. 25.*—*x. 13, 48.* *Luke iv. 35, 39, 41.*—*viii. 24.*—*ix. 21, 42, 55.*—*xvii. 3.*—*xviii. 15, 39.*—*xix. 39.*—*xxiii. 40.* *2 Tim. iv. 2.* *Jude 9.* Observe, in *Luke xvii. 3.* our Saviour, in giving the Rule, how we ought to deal with an offending Brother, useth a Word of the same Sort [εριστιμαω] with the Apostle here, in the same Case. First we are to rebuke an offending Brother; or, as it is *Mat. xviii. 15.* tell him of his Faults. These are all the Places in the *New Testament* where ΕΡΙΣΤΙΜΑΩ is used.

7. So that contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much Sorrow.

8. Wherefore I beseech

him, † I judge that alone SUFFICIENT, and do not intend to apply the apostolic Rod. — On the contrary, † instead of proceeding any further, it is your Duty to shew him Favour, † to own him again as a Christian Brother, and to comfort him, for fear he should, by too much Sorrow, be discouraged from the Christian Faith, and return into his former Gentile State *. — Upon which account,

† Ibid. *Τοιαύτα* refers to his Character, as a Penitent; as *τοιοῦτος* 1 Cor. v. 5. refers to his bad Character.

† Ver. 7. Whether *ῥωγίσιν* refers to *an intercourse* in ver. 5. as Mr. Lock thinks, or stands as I have put it, let the learned judge. I doubt not it refers to *Επίσημα αἶψιν*, as that was the Boundary of their Proceedings. q. d. Instead of proceeding further, *ῥωγίσιν*, on the contrary, you ought to retreat.

‖ Ibid. *Χαρίζομαι*, doth not properly and peculiarly signify to forgive, or remit Sin; but to shew favour unto, to deal favourably with, in Opposition to rigorous Proceedings.

* Ver. 7. *Μηπως—καταποθῇ*. This, I judge, refers to his Christian State. The Apostle was afraid, lest, by an excessive Load of Grief, his Christian Faith and Profession should be overwhelmed, or made to vanish and cease; (i. e. lest he should relapse into Heathenism) in the same Sense as Death or Mortality will entirely cease, when perfect and endless Life commenceth, 1 Cor. xv. 54. 2 Cor. v. 4. Or as the Egyptians were overwhelmed and ingulphed in the Red Sea, Heb. xi. 29. Thus the Adversary the Devil, is said, 1 Pet. v. 8. to swallow up, or devour Christians, who are not sober and watchful, when he draws them from the Principles of true Religion, into the Kingdom of Darkness, or Heathenism. The Word in all these Places is the same as here in the Text. The Sense I have given is confirmed by *Hos. viii. 8. Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles*, &c. prophesying of the Ten Tribes, which should be lost among the Heathen, by being incorporated among them, and returning no more to their own Land. See *Hos. ix. 3, 15, &c.*

count, † I make it my earnest, and particular Request, that you would renew and continue your former Love to him, as if he never had offended.—In this whole Affair, my Design was to try what Regards you had to me, as the Apostle of *Jesus Christ*; and I desire you would give this further Proof, how willing you are to follow my Counsels and Directions.—And be assured, I am ready on my Part, to deal favourably with any Person, whom ye, upon his Repentance, shall think fit to receive again into your Communion. * And this I am bound to do by my Office, as I am the Servant of *Christ*. For if I have shewn Favour to the incestuous Person; if I have forbore the Use of the *apostolic Rod*, I have not done it upon my own Head, or out of my own personal Lenity and Kindness; *but through you*, [*δι' υμᾶς*] upon account of the proper Steps you have taken to reform him, and as dispensing to you the Lenity and Kindness of our Lord

seech you, that ye would confirm your Love towards him.

9. *For to this End also did I write, that I might know the Proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.*

10. *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also; for if I forgive any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your Sakes forgive I it, in the Person of Christ.*

† *Ver. 8. Διό, is a Contraction of διὰ το, the same as διὰ το, which signifies in relation, or reference to, the Affair last mentioned.*

* *Obs.* How careful the Apostle is, lest the *Corinthians* should be too much frightened with the Terror of the *apostolic Rod*, and entertain an unfavourable Opinion of the Gospel, as rigorous and severe.

Lord Jesus Christ; whose Will it is that the apostolic Rod should be sparingly applied. — For this Reason; that we, his Disciples, may not, by coming too often under this severe Discipline, be over-reached by Satan, and tempted to despair, or to take a Distaste against the Christian Religion. For we know he desireth to have us, that he may sift us as Wheat, and taketh all Advantages to seduce, and turn us from the Truth.

For the following Reasons I judge the Offender was not delivered to Satan; and that he came under no other kind of Discipline, but what was executed by the Congregation alone.

I. Because the Apostle evidently speaks of what they were to do, and what he would do, as two different things. For he blameth them, that they had not done their Part without his further Admonitions, upon the Directions he had before given them, 1 Cor. v. 9. And he chargeth them expressly to do it now. And his Orders to them, were not to deliver the Offender to Satan, but expressly to cast, to put him away from among them; to avoid his Fellowship. The delivering over to Satan was what he himself had determined to do, because they had neglected to take him away from among them, 1 Cor. v. 2. and in opposition to this their neglect. For it immediately follows. *Εγώ μὲν γὰρ, q. d.* “But how vain, how unconcerned and careless soever you are, I tell you for my Part, I am resolved to do my Duty as an Apostle.”

II. The Particle *αὐτῶν* (2 Cor. ii. 6. *ἐκτίμια αὐτῶν*; the Rebuke, the Censure itself given by the many, i. e. by

i. e. by the Congregation,) plainly points at this, that he judged the *Rebuke* sufficient, without any further animadversion. Otherwise, why should he say, that the *Rebuke itself*, or the *Rebuke alone*, given by the Congregation, was *sufficient*.

III. He doth not say one Word, 2 Cor. ii. 4.—I I. of releasing the penitent Offender out of the Hands of *Satan*. Which surely he would have done, had he *delivered* him to *Satan*. But all that was to be done in *restoring* him, was to be done by the *Corinthian Church*, in renewing their Love to him. And as to the Affair of *delivering* him to *Satan*, he toucheth upon it no further than to give a Reason, why it was the Will of *Christ*, that the Disciples should not come too frequently under that kind of Discipline, lest they should be *over-reached* by *Satan*, &c. which falls in exactly with the Supposition, that the incestuous Person did not come under the Stroke of the *apostolic Rod*. But I submit the whole to the candid Censure of the Learned.

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